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ABSTRACT

Based on ideas and suggestions shared at many workshops run by the Community Resource Centre Training Project, this guide presents information on and guidelines for developing a community resource center for use by persons who want to start a resource center but don't know how to go about it. Written in response to the desperate need for access to information and to educational resources for poor and disenfranchised communities in South Africa, the guide is presented as a first person account of the activities of members of a committee doing the research for and going through the development and planning process for a hypothetical community program committed to lifelong learning. Seven chapters focus on: (1) types of resource centers; (2) public and school libraries; (3) planning a resource center; (4) finding an office, collecting donation, and making the center a community event; (5) funding and financial matters; (6) employing staff, collecting and arranging resources; and (7) celebration of achievement. A glossary and a list of resource organizations by type of center and by geographical area/city are appended. (DB)

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ULWAZI
For Power & Courage

Written by Libbie Dreyer and Jenni Karlsson
and illustrated by Duangsaun Phungula

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ULWAZI
For Power & Courage
A guide to starting a resource centre

Written by Libby Dreyer and Jenni Karlsson
and illustrated by Dumisani Phungula

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Community Resource Centre Training Project
1991

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Acknowledgements

This book draws together the ideas and suggestions shared at the many workshops run by the Community Resource Centre Training Project. The practices and ideas in the story include reflections of the values of those who attended and presented sessions.

Skilled people with pioneer experience in resource centre work are among those who were involved in the training courses, but we mention Jenni Bowen, the first co-ordinator of the Community Resource Centre Training Project, who will recognise fragments taken from her notes.

The characters in the text are fictitious and do not refer to any living person.

I live in the world of fantasy,
My world consists of little that I see around me,
I accept everything without questioning.
I am satisfied with everything
For I know nothing better.
I am ignorant.

I am happy, I am living,
I don't worry about anything
For I know nothing better.
My major needs are food and sleep.
I accept everything without reason,
I take what I get, for I know not
What I ought to get.
I am ignorant.

I feel fortunate in the abysmal sea of ignorance.
I can read, I can write.
However ignorant I may be
I know Mandela is in Pollsmor Prison
Although I do not know why.
Oh! People of Africa help me before it's too late.
Emancipate me from the chains of ignorance,
Feed me with the knowledge of truth
For freedom is getting rusty
On the pavements of oppression.

(Ignorant by Mzwakhe Mbuli, reprinted from Before Dawn, 1989)

Preface

Why has this book been written? For three reasons.

In our story Sipho visits some libraries and finds that "Information allows people to play a constructive role in society. Without information, we cannot develop our skills, overcome our problems or plan our lives. Information and education empower people."

Although countries throughout the world provide library and information services to their people, in South Africa the provision of these services has mirrored the apartheid society. The poor and disenfranchised communities have had limited access to information and the resources which would enable them to make decisions that will direct their own future. Aspirations and ambitions have been stunted and frustrated. In the absence of the state providing library and information services equally to all communities, some progressive service and community organisations began to offer these services in the 1980s and still continue to do so.

These resource centres were attempting an alternative to the traditional public library. Innovative and flexible ways of handling information were introduced. Additional communication and media production services were offered to complement the lending of publications relevant to the exposé of the apartheid regime and the political aspirations of the oppressed communities.

The volume of requests for information, advice and resource skills training addressed to existing resource centres in the late 1980s led to the formation of the Community Resource Centre Training Project in Natal. The requests have continued from all over South Africa, coming from the cities, the townships and even remote rural areas in the Northern Transvaal.

The courses offered by the Community Resource Centre Training Project have provided an opportunity for organisations to train their resource centre staff. Some of the materials developed for the training courses have provided the basis of this book. It is hoped that through this book the skills and procedures involved in setting up a resource centre will now reach a wider audience, and thus contribute to the empowerment of every community.

Secondly, there is a glamour about the idea of a resource centre which in fact can become the very reason for failing to get a resource centre project from the inspiration stage to the reality.

Some people become very excited on hearing of a "successful resource centre." Their eyes seem to gleam at the thought of shelves of books and more books, encyclopaedias, atlases, dictionaries, directories, newspapers, dailies, weeklies, commercial press, alternate press, progressive press, magazines, journals, pamphlets, brochures, handbills, posters, photographs, slides, videos, cassettes and audio-visual equipment - not to mention the radio, the cameras, the banners, the recorders, the megaphone, the public address system, the light table, the cutting board, cutting knives, rolling rulers, guillotines, staplers, punch, chalk, duster, newsprint, computers, printers, fax machines, photocopiers, white paper, coloured paper, transparencies, labels and even the candle with barbed wire for a memorial service. Their eyes don't just gleam, they sparkle! Soon one hears them saying "We want one too."

Ambitious plans are motivated and enthusiastic initiatives soon follow. Perhaps funds are even received. After a few months the "successful resource centre" is still an inspiration. After a year it may be only a wistful memory.

What went wrong? Why couldn't the plans be realised? Staff were employed. The space was there. The money was there. So why the lack of progress?

The answer seems to lie in the fact that although these organisations have the vision, they do not fully realise the extent of what they are

taking on when they say "We want one too." When an organisation starts a resource centre, it is like giving birth to a baby who has to be fed and clothed and cared for. A resource centre is an expensive undertaking requiring dedicated administration, an on-going budget for development and maintenance, and commitment. The resources will not take care of themselves and get themselves into the right order on the right shelf at the right time.

Yet even when staff is employed, many organisations find it such a temptation to load the resource centre worker with other administration tasks, or sneak fieldwork into the job description. Resource centre work hardly seems to be a priority and the organisation stretches itself so thinly that the resource centre staff get pulled in to do other work. Faced with neglect, the resources become disorganised and then disused and then the resource centre is an abandoned baby!

Through this book we want to address this problem of unrealistic expectations by giving an indication of the endurance and perseverance required for a successful resource centre to become a reality.

Thirdly, we want to make some social comments. To return to Sipho - he says: "Information is never neutral. The kind of information we get always depends on the social, economic and political position we face in society." Through this story we tell South Africa's legacy of unfair distribution of resources: that the rich get the best and biggest resources and the poor get the hand-me-downs; that the present public library infrastructure is inadequate as the information service for an oppressed community. This can be spelt out in terms of the geographic location, the content, language and media of the eurocentric collections, the decision-making procedures of management and the interface at every level with the community.

We have not written this book for librarians and those with information management skills. It has been written for those who want to start a resource centre but do not know how to set out on that adventure. But we do not want to offer a dry textbook. We have taken the basic principles and woven them into a simple imaginary story of one

community which has the aspiration to tackle their problems.

The characters in our story try to practise consultation, co-operation and democratic decision-making at each stage of their resource centre's development. This is an important feature of resource centres, because they are not just a cold set of collected materials on a freshly dusted shelf. The resource centres we know are like a home away from home, where the staff are known by their first names and they go many "second miles" for their community.

By no means is our story of this resource centre a model for every situation. Each individual venture must identify the information and resource needs of the community or potential user group and make appropriate plans to address those needs. We have merely tried to outline the major aspects of starting a resource centre but we do not pretend that this is a definitive book.

As it emerges from a period of severe repression, our society is in a phase anticipating a "new" South Africa. Numerous development initiatives abound and relationships are more fluid and flexible than ever before, as past enemies learn to speak to one another. Being aware of the short shelf life of books dealing with social issues in such a period, we have tried to approach the subject in such a way that this book will be useful for some time.

As is being increasingly understood, resource centres and libraries are an integral part of the educational matrix of a society. The management of information supports every discipline and field of study, every new discovery and every step forward. The Educational Resources Information Service (ERIS), a project of the Media Resource Centre, addresses itself to the imbalance of educational resources in South Africa. It does this by finding ways to facilitate greater access to these resources. Hence ERIS's commitment to this publication.

Hey Ta!

Hey Ta! My name is Nomsa Xaba. I am a member of the Resource Centre Committee in Umlazi, a township near Durban. Our Resource Centre was set up through the hard work of the Umlazi Civic Association. Our Civic takes up community issues in Umlazi, and focusses on services that the government has denied our community in the past.

It took us three years to really get our Resource Centre going. We decided to write this book in order to share the experience and skills we have gained in the process. We hope that other community organisations and educators may benefit from the lessons we have learnt in setting up our Resource Centre.

Our township, Umlazi, is big. Over 500 000 people live here, but there are few educational and community services in our area. We have no public library in Umlazi. Most shops, halls and services have been built in the city centre. Apartheid laws and government town-planning have separated whites, blacks, "coloureds" and Indians into different areas by big highways, railway lines and long distances. To get to the

We need to develop our community
Workers should know their rights
Many people are unemployed
Students need study material

city centre, we have to pay high bus and taxi fares. This makes it difficult for us to use the facilities in the city centre.

Our civic association takes up community campaigns to improve the services in Umlazi and this year we held many workshops to voice our demands. At the education workshop, people spoke of their need to find out more about conditions facing them:

- A student, Sipho, raised the problems found at schools. He said students needed textbooks and equipment, a place to study and information about careers and further education.
- Thandi, our civic organiser, said that we needed to look at different ways to help our community get on its feet. We also needed to find out what other community organisations were doing, and to make contact with them.
- Jabu, a trade union organiser, said that workers needed to know about their rights at work.
- Cynthia, who is not working because she is caring for her little ones, said that so many people in Umlazi are unemployed and looking for jobs. People did not know when there were jobs available, and they did not know how community organisations could help them.

It was clear we did not have much to offer our community. But we decided that we had to organise what we had and build our strength as a community by opening our own doors of learning and culture!

Someone said that what we needed was a resource centre. We were not too sure what that meant or how it could help us. Maybe it was like a library, or an advice office. We were not too sure.

After talking about this new idea for a little while, those present at the education workshop decided that before we rejected the idea, we needed to find out more about resource centres. So we worked out a plan of action. We elected a sub-committee of five people. They had to find out about resource centres and whether they could help us solve our problems. Along with Thandi, Jabu, Sipho and Cynthia, I was one of those chosen to help in this task. In the sub-committee, we tried to share the work between us. Thandi agreed to co-ordinate finding out about resource centres, their aims and objectives. Sipho offered to find out about public libraries and school libraries. We all helped in every way we could.

We started our research by writing down what we thought a resource centre and library were and making a list of questions that we wanted answered. We then visited some resource organisations and libraries in Durban and Pietermaritzburg. Busi, one of the civic members who worked as a librarian at the university, found some written information about resource centres and she passed this on to us. We then put all of the ideas together and began to prepare our report. ■

Chapter 1

More than Bookshelves

After a few weeks of travelling to town, asking questions, visiting organisations, schools, libraries, looking at a few resource centres, and thinking about everything we had seen and heard, our sub-committee met one Saturday at the local high school. We used one of the classrooms for our meeting. Cynthia had brought a flask of coffee for everyone to share. Then we sat down to hear the reports from Thandi and Sipho.

Thandi's report about resource centres

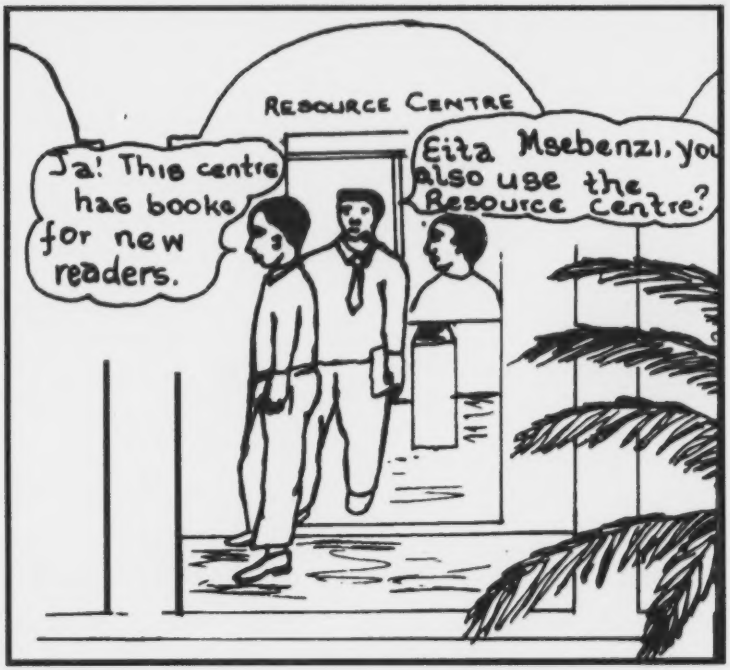
Friends, I agreed to find out about resource centres. At first we all thought of a resource centre as a place which stored books for the community to use. As I found out more about this work, I realised that a resource centre was much more than that.

I found out about the beginnings of resource centres from Ma Zuma, a community worker who has been active in our area since 1952. She told me that like many other developments in our community, resource centres began in the 1980s.

"At that time," Ma Zuma said: "Life in our townships was abuzz with resistance to apartheid. Our people started many different community, civic, and political organisations. As these organisations became popular, we realised that we needed to deal with local as well as national problems. We needed to build our organisations and work out how to put our policies into practice.

"Slowly we began to build resource and information centres. Sometimes they were small, with just a few books in a box which was taken to meetings for people to borrow. Sometimes they were bigger. If a church gave us a room, we started a small bookshelf library. Soon the resource centres grew so that we were able to offer the community solutions to many more problems. We were able to develop literacy and education programmes. We provided media training and facilities. We collected information to help solve our community problems.

"We ran these resource centres on principles which we valued. We were proud that our resource centres were independent of the government and its funding, but we did not charge the community for the services we gave. We included the community in making decisions about the way their resource centres were run. Everyone could use the resources and nothing was secret."



I learnt so much from the memories of Ma Zuma.

When I went visiting the resource centres in Durban and Pietermaritzburg, I found that there wasn't a perfect model of a resource centre. They are all different, but they all have some common aims and approaches. I listed these:

1. They try to provide information to help people with their problems. Often the information that is needed is not published. Resource centres try to produce their own materials which can easily be used by people who have just learnt how to read. Sometimes they make posters and displays. Sometimes they make their own cassette recordings or resource packs, and let other people take copies. They produce information that is relevant to our community needs.
2. They keep different kinds of materials like books, posters, videos, slide-tape programmes and cassettes. We do not find these resources in public libraries, especially the pamphlets, magazines, newspapers and newsletters which cover the social and political issues that affect our lives.
3. Some resource centres hold media workshops so that more people in our community can use the materials and equipment.
4. Those with education problems can attend tutorials, receive career guidance or join the literacy group.
5. If the resource centre cannot help with the problem, there are usually many other places that will be able to do so. People are then referred to these organisations.
6. Resource centres work with the democratic structures of the communities they serve and are accountable to them.
7. Because they have such close links with the communities they serve, resource centres often have fresh information about things happening in the community, or they have special documents and recordings of the community's history.
8. As part of the community, resource centre workers become involved in many community events and campaigns. Resource centres are sometimes used for poetry readings, video shows or lunchtime music.

I now began to understand the role that a resource centre could play in our community. Resource centres try to reach people whether they are illiterate or educated, young or old, working or unemployed and no matter what language is spoken. As I became more interested, I wondered whether Umlazi would ever have its own resource centre.

There are many different kinds of resource

centres in South Africa. I divided them into different groups:

1 General resource centres
2 Resource centres proactive in community activities
3 Special resource centres
– for specialists eg community and trade union educators
– for special groups in the community eg youth and workers

General resource centres

Many resource centres were set up because the city and government failed to provide library services. These resource centres are open to everyone.

In Clermont, a township near Pinetown, the community started a general resource centre. It is called the Sibusiso Resource Centre. It is managed by an independent trust with representatives from the community. It is situated in a bigger building which offers various community services. There is a creche, a community hall where different activities like sewing groups, educational seminars, and clinics are held. The resource centre caters specially for the youth. Most of the books in Sibusiso Resource Centre were bought with money from a British Council grant. Their resources include materials needed for studies as well as other subjects outside the formal school syllabus.

The Ecumenical Resource Centre, in the centre of Durban, was set up by a church-based trust. It is also a general resource centre used by many individuals and organisations. It is very popular with the youth and community organisations. There is a collection of books, periodicals and newspapers, videos, slides and photographs, sound and audiovisual recorders and basic media production equipment. Some equipment can be hired and they sell publications which are not easily found in bookshops. Occasionally video shows and media workshops are held. The Ecumenical Resource Centre is situated in a bigger building where other community services are offered.

Resource centres proactive in community activities

These resource centres say that it is not enough just to tell people about their rights because telling them will not mean that they get their rights. They say that information needs to be used to organise people to solve their problems. These resource centres co-ordinate with civic organisations, providing the information to deal with the daily experience of the community.

The Afesis Advice and Resource Centre, in the Border area of the Cape, works with community, student, youth, and women's organisations. It gives advice on housing, pensions, unemployment insurance funds, and other issues. It also has educational resources which organisations use in their programmes.

Special resource centres - for specialists

Many service organisations have resource centres for specialists. They provide research and support services to the staff of community, civic, rural, education and trade union organisations. These resource centres are often in the city centre or at a university. They provide specialised resource materials and information which the staff repackage and publish as new materials to be distributed. Although these resource centres are often not open to the community, they play an important role in the development of appropriate materials for people who have limited reading skills.

From these resource centres many educational and informative materials have been produced on issues such as wage bargaining for trade unionists, formal and non-formal education programmes, and information regarding current political developments in South Africa.

The Industrial Health Unit (IHU) at the University of Natal has a very specialised collection of publications relating to industry, work, health and safety. This Unit works with trade unionists to publish pamphlets and booklets about health and workers.

Special resource centres - for special groups in the community

These resource centres are open to all members of the community even though they serve a particular group within the community.

I found that there are resource centres just for those who are leaving school and thinking about a career. The Career Information Centre (CIC) in Durban, provides information about careers, work education and training courses. They also keep lists of bursaries and scholarships, and sometimes even advise people where they can

find work. Anyone can visit these resource centres. CIC also has a mobile resource centre which visits rural communities and schools.

There are also resource centres, called "Worker Libraries", specially for workers and trade unionists in Cape Town and Johannesburg. These resource centres host educational seminars, conferences and cultural events.

The tragic education crisis in our country has forced many communities to provide their own educational resources for the youth. The Each Working in Education (EWE) Project in the Eastern Cape, is a resource centre for youth, which was started when hundreds of school students were detained in 1987. The students needed to continue their studies while in prison and the Ewe Project helped them. At first the project co-ordinated correspondence studies for the students, but once they were released and unable to attend local schools, boxes containing books from a resource centre in Grahamstown, were swopped among these students from nine Eastern Cape communities.

These portable bookcases contain study materials, interesting books, newspapers and some videos. A co-ordinator from each community is trained to take care of the borrowing and use of materials. Bookcases are swopped every three months and new books are added. The EWE Project committee has members from the youth of each of the nine communities and they decide what books, videos or newspapers they want in their bookcases.

It was very interesting visiting some of these resource centres and finding out about the exciting work which they are doing to help our community shine. I was very proud that our communities were not submissive in their oppression.

But resource centre workers also told me of the difficulties they face. Because they rely on donations, they cannot grow or rent big offices and provide collections like the public libraries. They cannot employ all the staff needed to respond to the many demands placed on them by their communities. Many resource centre workers also spoke of how difficult it was to do their work without training and with few places where they can get support and follow up services. Many resource centre workers also had to work in dangerous and difficult conditions during the State of Emergency.

When Thandi finished her report, we all took a break to stretch our legs. Her research had been very thorough, leaving us certain that the civic meeting would be well informed. As we gathered outside in the sunshine, we laughed at the stories that Thandi had picked up from resource centre workers. ■

Chapter 2

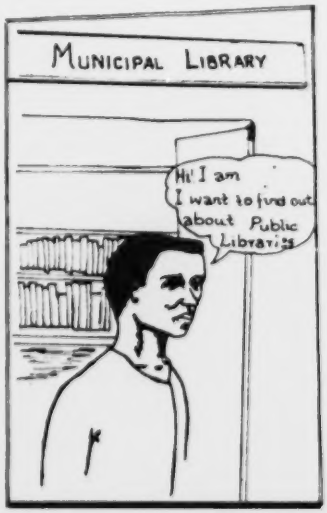
Serving the Nation?

Soon we were ready to continue with the sub-committee meeting. We sat down to find out all about Sipho's investigations. He had been finding out about libraries in schools, and the public libraries in the townships and cities.

Hi! Every time I visited one of the resource centres which Thandi told us about, I found many friends from Umlazi. I wondered about this. Surely there were other libraries? Why did it seem that only community organisations were serving our information needs? Was this not the responsibility of our schools or the city, or the government? I found that the answer to this question was not so simple!

Information allows people to play a constructive role in society. Without information, we cannot develop our skills, overcome our problems or plan our lives. Information and education empower us. But information is never neutral. The kind of information we get always depends on the social, economic and political position we enjoy in society.

I had to find out about public and school libraries and I found that in our country, information is not freely available to all. The apartheid laws denied people the right to use public library facilities and an imbalanced school library system developed. In the past the government controlled information by passing laws to weaken opposition to its policies.



Public libraries

I visited a public library. There I was told that libraries for the public are made available by various authorities.

Public libraries:
1. The main city libraries and branches, controlled by town councils, serving residents, and funded out of city taxes (rates).
2. The provincial libraries, controlled by provincial councils, serving the small towns and rural areas, and funded by taxes.
3. The state libraries, controlled by government, serving the nation, and funded by taxes.

Library services should not be a privilege for the few, but the right of all. Since 1948, provincial and city library services have been severely restricted. Because they were funded by a particular authority, in the past public libraries only served the people in the geographical area of that authority. Generally speaking, we can say that our black communities in the rural areas and townships were therefore excluded or forgotten and are therefore without libraries now.

By November 1986, only nine public libraries had been set up in black townships in Natal. But many people hesitate to use these libraries because they have been attached to the Regional Services Councils and the town councils which do not have the support of the communities.

At this point Sipho reminded us that our township of half a million people did not have a public library!

In 1991, with the scrapping of the Separate Amenities Act, public libraries were opened for everyone to use regardless of race.

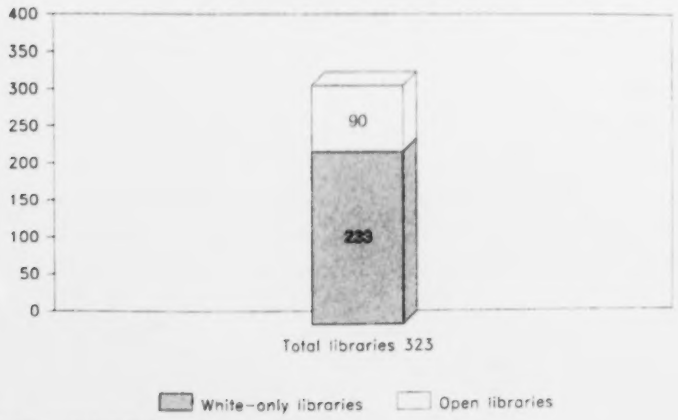
Nevertheless I have heard that some city councils have used membership fees to keep libraries restricted to white members. Only people who are residents of the city can use the library or a high membership fee is charged. It is said that some city libraries even request written proof from black readers that they live or work in the city!

When I found out about the public libraries in Johannesburg and Soweto, it was very clear that our taxes have been unfairly distributed for the libraries in those areas.

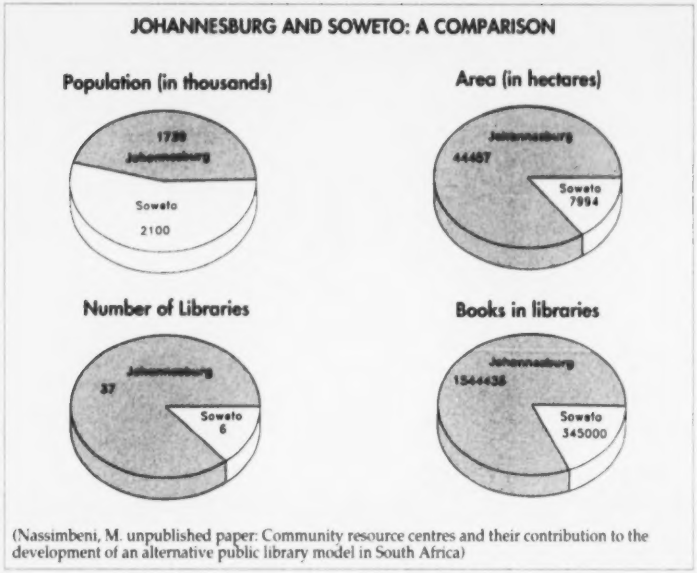
This sorry state is true of all parts of our country. Very few provincial library services have been built in black townships. I found that by June 1985 blacks in the Cape only had access to a few libraries.

The public libraries provided by the authorities have failed to address our information needs. They do not consult with local communities. Books, which are not often relevant to our needs

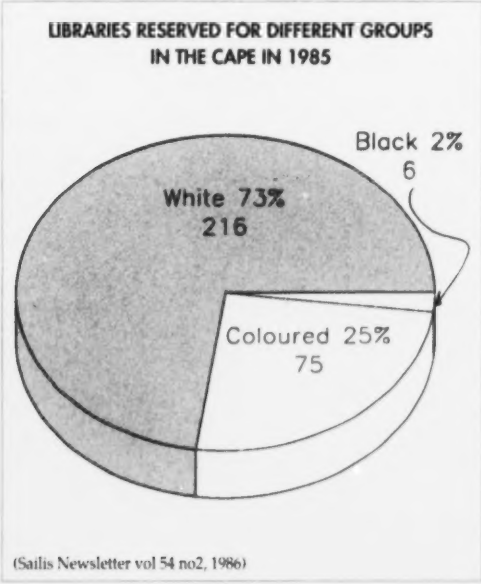
A SURVEY IN 1988 OF SOUTH AFRICAN LIBRARIES OPEN TO MORE THAN ONE RACE GROUP



(Language Projects Review vol6 no1/2, 1991)



(Nassimbeni, M. unpublished paper: Community resource centres and their contribution to the development of an alternative public library model in South Africa)



(Sailis Newsletter vol 54 no2, 1986)

or in our languages, are chosen by the authorities. They do not keep information like township pamphlets, posters, newsletters and other grey literature. There are also very few books and other materials which tell us of the history of black South Africa.

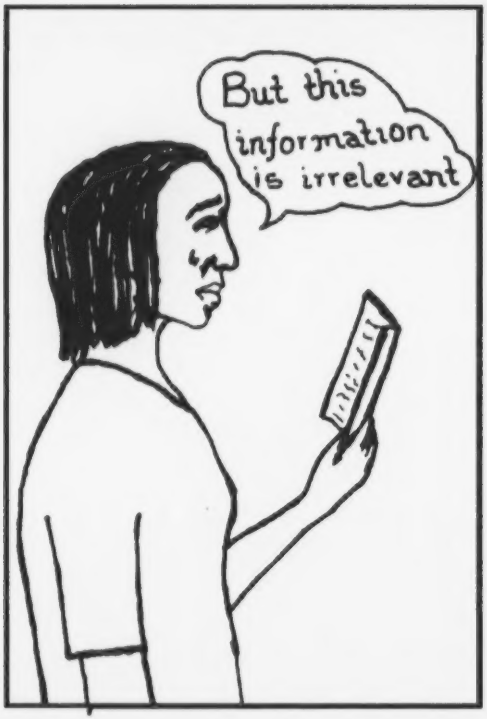
From 1948 the government introduced many regulations like the Publications Act, the Publications Control Board, and the States of Emergency which restricted the information we could read. These were to control our thinking and reading. This meant that we were only able to get a one-sided view of events and ideas.

But even though the regulations have been scrapped, we still cannot read many of the previously banned books because the collections in public libraries seem very limited and conservative. I think that is why so many of my friends preferred resource centres.

The friends that I met when I was visiting one public library said that they liked the library because they could sit there and study. But it seemed such a pity to only use the tables and chairs when such a lot of public money had been spent on all those books.

School libraries

Being a student made it easy for me to find out about school libraries but I found even greater



imbalances.

School libraries are funded and controlled by the school's education department. The same inequalities that we see between the black and white classrooms, we see in the school libraries.

I do not need to tell you that most schools in black townships do not even have enough text books, let alone libraries. Even where there are libraries, they are usually inadequate. Many libraries only have old text books and there are no materials to support the study programme. Many of the librarians lack formal training and have other teaching commitments. There are so few school libraries in black schools that many students see a library for the first time in high school.

Sipho ended his report. The facts and figures which he had presented led us to believe that the public and school library systems were meant to provide unequal services to the different communities. That made us angry.

It was the end of the meeting. But as we left to go home to our families, Cynthia reminded us of Thandi's findings: that resource centres were set up to challenge these policies and practices. ■

Chapter 3

Meetings, Questions & Decisions

It had been announced that we would present our sub-committee report at the next civic meeting. We felt as nervous as school children at a speech contest. Ma Zuma playfully teased us which made us more relaxed. In our sub-committee report we said that we liked the resource centres we had visited. We suggested that, yes, we did need a resource centre in Umlazi. But we were not sure how we wanted to go about it so that everyone would be happy.

The civic then discussed how we could set up our own resource centre. We needed more facts about our own community. We agreed to ask our Umlazi community what resources we needed and wanted. The sub-committee needed this basic information to guide us if the resource centre was to be a success with the people.

Spending time on the first phase of planning is a good investment.

The civic decided to set up some planning meetings with the people in Umlazi who would use the resource centre. There would be general meetings for the whole community and specific meetings for organisations.

General meetings

We called three general meetings in different areas. We went from door to door inviting people to attend and explaining the purpose of the meeting. We also put up posters at shops, the clinic, the Technikon, at schools as well as on the light poles along the street. Someone had a loudhailer, and on the Saturday morning we drove around telling people of the meeting the following Sunday afternoon. At the general meetings we discussed many questions.

1. Was there a need for a resource centre in Umlazi?
2. What kind of resource centre was needed?
3. What activities should the resource centre organise?
4. Would it really meet the needs of the people? Whose needs exactly?
5. Who would the resource centre be accountable to?

6. What link should the resource centre have with the civic association?
7. How would the problems and conflict in the area affect the work of the resource centre?
8. Was the resource centre a priority for Umlazi?

Specific meetings with organisations

We approached many different organisations about starting a resource centre because we wanted to cater for the community's different interests and needs. We spoke to the parents' committee, the stokvel association, trade union organisers, health workers and student organisations. We asked them similar questions.

1. Was there a need for a resource centre in Umlazi?
2. What kind of resources did organisations need?
3. What activities should the resource centre organise?
4. Would it really meet the needs of the organisation? Which needs exactly?
5. Was a resource centre necessary, or were there other organisations doing the same work?
6. What link should the resource centre have with other organisations in Umlazi?
7. Which other organisations should be consulted?

After all these meetings, our sub-committee was again requested to put all the comments together. When we read through all the notes, we were worried that we still did not know enough about what people wanted in the resource centre. We decided to draw up a questionnaire. Cynthia volunteered to do this.

Hi! I am Cynthia. I had never drawn up a questionnaire before, so I decided to ask assistance from another organisation that often conducts surveys. They gave me some guidelines.

Guidelines for a Questionnaire

1. Ensure that enough people fill in the questionnaire so that it is a representative sample.
2. Make it as simple and straight forward as possible so that people can fill it in easily.
3. Questions should cover all the information needed.
4. Ensure that the people who were helping understand all the questions so that they can answer enquiries.

At first I struggled to write down the questions. I discussed them with Thandi and Jabu. They made a lot of suggestions and changes. At last we had some handwritten questions. I went to visit my friend who has a typewriter and together we neatly typed the questions on a clean sheet of paper, leaving big spaces for people to write in their answers. Sipho was able to make many photocopies at the technikon. Soon we were ready to go from door to door.

DO WE NEED A RESOURCE CENTRE IN UMLAZI?

1. Which section do you live in?

2. How old are you?

3. Male / Female

4. What is your level of formal education?
Primary / Std 6 - 10 / University / Technikon / College.

5. What work do you do?
Unemployed / Student / Worker / Professional / Self-employed / Other:

6. Which organisations do you belong to?
Church / Stokvel / Political / Youth / Women / Sport / Other:

7. What kind of information would help your organisation?

8. What kind of information would help you in your work?

9. Which services should the resource centre provide?
Legal advice / Literacy classes / Tutorials / Career guidance / Children's storytelling / Exhibitions / Newspapers / Books for lending / Poetry readings / Plays / Video shows & lending / Photocopier / Media workshops / Telephone & Fax / Computer

10. What would you like the resource centre to keep?
Study books / Stories / Children's books / Poetry / Pamphlets Newsletters / Magazines / Posters / Videos / Cassettes

11. Do you have any special comments to make?

NB: This survey is conducted by the Umlazi Civic Association

The questionnaire was distributed very widely. We wrote down all the addresses where we had left the questionnaires and after two weeks we went and collected them. It was nice to visit in people's homes. Some of the older youth helped us with this collection because it was such a big task.

But collecting the replies was only half the job. I still had to sort all the answers so that they would be useful. We again waited for the next civic association meeting and presented the community's ideas for their own resource centre.

The sub-committee suggested that the resource centre should provide the services of a general resource centre but focus on our community's educational needs.

The questionnaire showed that we needed a resource centre that was open to the whole community and catered for everybody's needs, old and young, educated and uneducated. We needed a resource centre which would assist people with literacy and other educational programmes, and help them solve their problems. People wanted a meeting place for the community.

We were at the stage now where the civic had to be clear what the aims and objectives of the resource centre would be.

When we began discussing our aims Sipho remembered a quote from a book he had read at school. It explained why aims were important. Sipho stood up to tell us about the book. It was about a little girl called Alice. She asked a cat which way she should go.

> "That depends on where you want to go to." said the cat
> "I don't much care where ... " said Alice.
> "Then it doesn't matter which way you go." said the cat.

Not all of us were clear what Sipho was trying to tell us, although we all laughed about a cat that could speak. Then Jabu explained that Alice was like the fool going to town who gets into a taxi and pays the fare without finding out if the taxi is going there. Jabu said that if we were not clear about the aims of the resource centre now, we would not know if our resource centre was really developing our community and we would not be sure when it was achieving those aims.

The central aim of an organisation or project is its statement of what it is setting out to achieve in its work, or the reason for its existence. The central aim must be very clearly stated by the project. It should be clear and not vague. It must be easily understood by project workers, users and the community. Everyone involved in the project should know what the central aim is. Everyone should accept it and be prepared to carry it out.

A statement of aims must clearly say the

what, the who and the where of the central purpose. Projects need to review aims regularly to make sure that what they are doing still meets the needs that started the resource centre. If the needs have changed, the aim must change.

We suggested aims. These were written on newsprint. After an hour we had agreed that the central aim of our resource centre was *"To empower our community in Umlazi with information – by starting a community resource centre, to help direct and develop our future – both as a community and as individuals."*

Everyone was happy with this progress and decided to carefully list the objectives to achieve our aim.

The objectives are the programme of action that the organisation sets out to do to achieve the central aim. Objectives must be clear and practical. They will often have a measure like a time period attached to them so that the success and progress of the project can be measured and evaluated. Sometimes an organisation might have a number of objectives to achieve its aim.

Working methods are strategies or detailed practical steps. The methods will lead to our objectives which then lead to the central aim.

We started a list of the objectives for the resource centre.

1. Within the next three months an elected Resource Centre Committee of five people will make the practical plans to start a resource centre.

2. Resources for new readers and Zulu readers will be collected.

3. Literacy classes can be held each week once the resource centre is started.

We also had to decide on the way in which we would work. Jabu reminded us that Samora Machel said:

> "Our working methods are not of secondary importance, as it is through them that we apply our decisions."

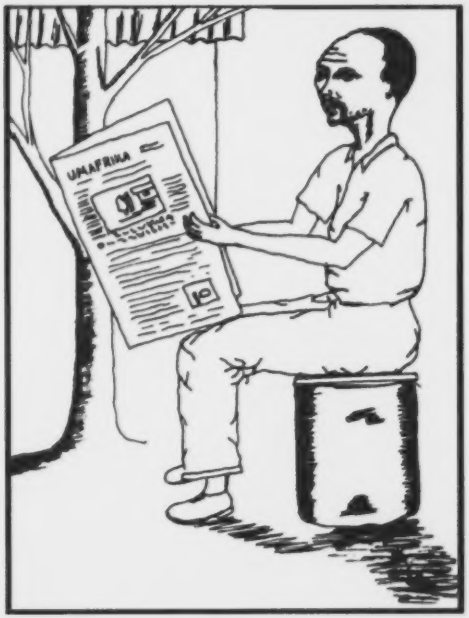
When we looked at our aims, objectives and methods together, we could see a clear statement of where we wanted to go with the resource centre.

Now we thought we had enough information to begin organising our resource centre. At the final planning meeting, some senior civic members, including Ma Zuma, made further recommendations.

- Our resource centre would only succeed if the Umlazi community decided on the policy and work of the resource centre. We had to develop links with community organisations and workers. We had to plan the resource centre from the bottom upwards rather than from the top downwards.

- Our people were tired of other people always making decisions on our behalf, so we wanted access to information that would help us and empower us to make wise decisions about our future both as a community and as individuals. For example we needed addresses of places like advice offices and bursary offices. We needed books that explained the law.

- Most of the information we needed was not found in a bookshop and often it is here among us. We would have to find new ways of gathering information. We should use our people as sources of information, record their stories, and repackage the information and use it to change the conditions we



face in our communities.

• For too long we had heard about Europe and its literature and the history of colonial empires and rulers. Now we wanted to read about our own history, African history, written by Africans. We wanted to read newspapers written by blacks for black readers.

• Our resource centre should keep books in all South Africa's languages. We should encourage people who use the resource centre to write novels and poetry and distribute their work through the resource centre.

• We could not have a resource centre where people had to be silent. We wanted our resource centre to reflect the spirit of our community.

• We had a small budget, but that did not mean we were beggars or disorganised. We had to find ways of starting the resource centre with buildings that were easy to maintain and which could be used for other activities as well.

• Since we were a poor community we wanted to be able to share resources that were expensive - not only books, but also videos, photocopiers, tape recorders, and special equipment like fax machines and computers.

• For years we have fought for our rights and freedom. Now in our own resource centre we must guarantee the right to learn, the right to know, freedom of thought, freedom of expression and freedom of association.

• We want those who will work in the resource centre to be involved in our community's education, assisting in literacy campaigns and other activities.

• Above all our community must not be divided. We wanted all to enjoy dignity and respect. Some of our community had not enjoyed much education, some were unemployed, some were aged. We did not want to exclude anyone. The information must be stored in a way in which people can easily find what they need. Our resource centre also had to provide these brothers and sisters with good resources like videos and games. Those who wanted reading and writing skills should be assisted. Our resource centre should arrange literacy classes for them.

• We should also continue to challenge the public libraries. The doors of learning and culture must be open and freely available to all!

We had worked out our plans and now we had to start our resource centre. Our first steps were to find an office, start collecting resources and make sure that we were secure financially.

We still had many questions. Where would we, a poor community, find the money for our resource centre? All the materials, books, newspapers and equipment were expensive. It

was at this stage that we almost lost our courage and gave up the idea of a resource centre.

But Busi, who works at the university library, encouraged us and said that information was one of the most valuable things for our community. She suggested that we start small, with a small resource centre, and if we worked together it would soon grow, like the little seed which grows into a small bush which grows into a large tree which gives shade and shelter for many people, and the resource centre would become our pride, our power and our courage. ■

Chapter 4

Hard Work

Busi's words lifted our spirits. They reminded us of why we had started working on the idea of a resource centre with so much dedication. Her words reminded us that we wanted to empower our community. We could not do this if we ourselves were beginning to doubt what we could achieve.

We, in the sub-committee, were now eager to begin work on our resource centre. We asked the secretary of the civic association to raise the resource centre as an item on the agenda of the next civic meeting.

On the night of the meeting, we entered the hall full of excitement. I looked around. It was packed full of people. Youth were leading the singing. There were women, men, children, elderly people and all the familiar faces who attended meetings regularly. We were sure that the community would accept our proposals, but things did not go as easily as the sub-committee had imagined!

When we came to the resource centre item on the agenda, Bongani, from a trade union, argued that we should not go ahead with building a resource centre. He said that when we had started, we were not aware of how difficult it would be, that we were all busy, we had other

commitments and we just did not have the kind of experience between us to start something as complicated as a resource centre.

People began to debate what Bongani had said. Some were angry. They said he was just lazy, and did not have enough confidence in his community. Others asked how we could build a resource centre when we had no money to buy the things that were needed? Further, how were we going to operate the resource centre when there were few in our community with the skills to run it?

Finally, Ma Zuma, who had quietly listened while people were arguing stood up. "Yes, building a community resource centre is hard work." she said. "Yes, we do face many obstacles. We do not have money. We do not have the support of the local government. We do not trust their advice and they will never give us money. We must not pretend that it will be easy, or that we will not face many difficulties. We will be building something which is new to our community and we do not have all the answers now.

"But we will learn many things as we build our resource centre. If we think only of the difficulties we face, we will never get anywhere. Then we might as well drop dead! We must remember that we have one great strength. This is the power of unity and commitment of our people. Let us not start with big plans that we can never achieve, rather let us build on what we have already. If we start our resource centre from the grassroots of our community, if we share the skills and the resources that we have, then we really will build a community-owned resource centre. Amandla!"

Ma Zuma gave us courage. She convinced us all to start planning our resource centre with what we had. The meeting then elected a committee, made up of Thandi, Sipho, Cynthia and myself, Nomsa. They mandated the committee to begin setting up a resource centre immediately. We would be called the Resource Centre Committee and we would have to report on our progress to civic meetings. We were also given strict instructions to spend as little money as possible, and to include other community members in the work. Important decisions about developing our resource centre would be made at civic meetings, otherwise we would use the discussions of past civic meetings and our survey results as our guidelines.

The Resource Centre Committee decided to hold meetings once a week. We set target dates for completing work so that the resource centre

could become a reality and not just plans in the air. We shared the work between us, with each person responsible for a certain task. Committee members were also encouraged to get help from other members in the community. The civic association chairperson reminded us that, when necessary, we could co-opt someone to the Resource Centre Committee.

We made a list of our tasks and who was responsible for them.

Task	Name	Done
Raise funds	Thandi	✓
Find room	Nomsa	
Collect books newspapers etc	Sipho	
Literacy Day	Cynthia	

Some work we had to do together as a committee. We made all the decisions which affected the resource centre together and then we took the decisions back to be discussed and approved or changed at the civic association meeting. We were responsible for suggesting how the resource centre would be run on a daily basis.

Thandi raises some funds

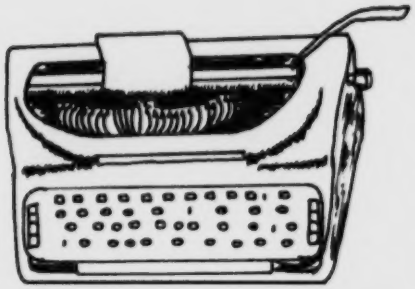
Thandi decided that we had to begin raising money as soon as possible. If we had no money, she said, we could do nothing. She also said that if we organised activities in our community, and tried to raise money from Umlazi, more people would get to know about the resource centre. If they had contributed money, they would feel they owned the resource centre and they would then be interested in its progress and development. But fundraising was a big job, so Thandi asked different community groups to help organise fundraising activities.

Many community organisations and groups agreed to assist with fundraising.

Some of the ways that people raised money were:

1. The youth organisation agreed to hold a video show in the church hall. They hired a video machine and got three popular videos. They asked for donations from those who came to watch the videos.
2. The soccer club agreed to donate 5% of all tickets sold at three of their matches. Because they were a very popular team, the resource centre received a lot of money from them!
3. Some business people and taxi owners were asked to give financial donations.
4. The women's organisation organised a raffle of a basket of tinned food.
5. The civic sold T-shirts, magazines and publications at meetings, and donated a portion of this money towards the resource centre.

We eventually raised enough money to begin organising our resource centre. We decided to prioritise the essential items we needed to start. Some of the items we could make. There were many things that we wanted to buy from the beginning, but we just did not have enough money and so we tried to start with the basics. We had enough money to buy wood to build



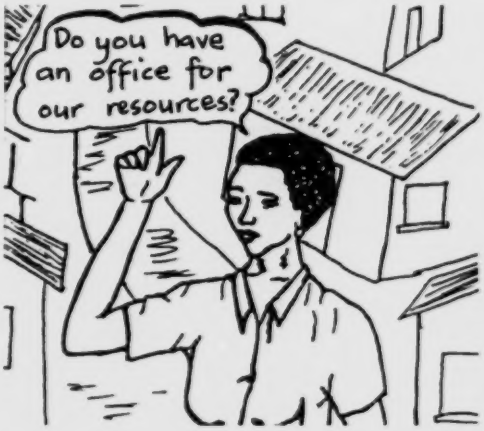
shelves, a table and six chairs, a second-hand typewriter, some essential books and materials. We also kept some money for stationery and basic operating of the resource centre.

Because our money was limited, we tried to get equipment donated to us or second-hand. A resource centre in town had some extra copies of books. They gave these to us and we carried them back in old photocopy paper boxes. We also tried to make some items. A construction company donated some imperfect bricks. We used them to separate the wooden shelves. We made book-ends from the bricks by covering them in bright material and used the lids of photocopy paper boxes to store folded newspapers. We collected strong empty breakfast cereal boxes, cut them in half and painted them. They were good to store brochures, pamphlets and leaflets which could not stand on their own on the shelves.

We very carefully recorded all the expenses and income we made. We were lucky because one of the members of the Resource Centre Committee, Sipho, was studying accountancy at the technikon, and so he took responsibility for recording our finances. In the beginning we used a simple system in a book, just writing down income and expenditure at different sections in the book. This allowed us to know what we had spent our money on, and how much money we had left over in our budget. We kept our money in a locked box, but as time went by, we realised that we would have to develop a more detailed and better financial system.

Finding an office

We had to have a base or space from which we could start organising the resource centre. Many organisations and groups had operated small resource collections from a cupboard in another organisation's office, or from a member's home. The Resource Centre Committee decided that this was not good enough. We felt that we had to try to find an office or small room from which to begin organising our resource centre.



I identified some of the places from which we might hire an office. I went to the shopping centre to find out if there was an office available and I was told that there was one we could hire in a month's time but we could not afford to pay the high rent. I asked the local church if we could use their empty room next to their church hall. The minister was not very interested and told me that he did not want trouble makers in his church. I was beginning to get discouraged.

I knew that there was a small room at the back of the nearby school hall that was not being used. We thought that it would be an ideal place, as the

resource centre would then be close to school students. I approached the headmaster, Mr Bhengu. He was unsure of who we were and the work we were doing. He also said he did not want trouble makers in his school. We explained to the headmaster that we were linked to our township civic association. When I explained to him the idea of a resource centre and how it would help our community and specially his school which had no library, he said he would speak to the school committee, Students' Representative Council, and the teachers and come back to me with a decision.

By this time the whole committee was getting desperate. The civic was impatient. They wanted to know what progress we had made, and we could not even show them the room from which the resource centre would operate. Then Thandi said that there was a small room at the back of her house, but it was very small and had no electricity. We decided to use her room for Resource Centre Committee meetings and for storing all our equipment. But we were not happy to organise the resource centre in this room.

We had almost forgotten about the room at the back of the school hall when the headmaster came back to me with an answer. The school had said yes, and we did not have to pay rent as long as the room was used for the benefit of the students and the community. We were thrilled!

The Resource Centre Committee had to reorganise the room before we could use it. Members of the youth organisation agreed to assist us. We had to paint and clean it. We painted the walls in white to make it as light as possible. Sipho's mother was a dressmaker. She donated some bright curtains which she had made herself.

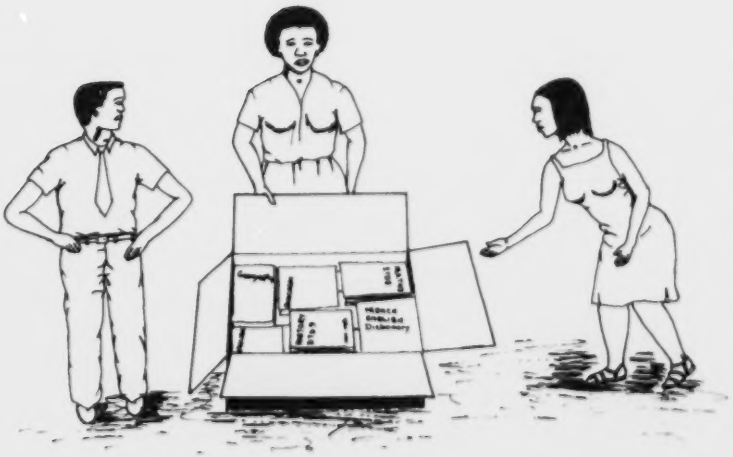
We organised the shelves against the wall with no windows. The shelves could not be too high, because then people would not be able to reach the books. We put the table and chairs against the windows for light to read. We placed the typewriter at one corner of the table for anyone to use. Next to the door we placed a big wooden box and a chair. The person on duty could see who was coming in and out.

When we had finished painting and cleaning the room we looked around. What a well

organised but empty room! We all laughed! Mr Bhengu came to look at the new resource centre. He was so proud to have us in his school.

The next week the resource centre faced its first problem. S'bo, a volunteer, was supposed to open the resource centre. That morning I was in Durban at a meeting with another service organisation. In the afternoon I received a message to come to the resource centre immediately. When I got to the resource centre, it was closed. When I opened the door I found a message which had been slipped under the door. Mr Bhengu asked me to come and see him immediately.

Mr Bhengu told me there had been a burglary in the school. Someone had broken into his office through a window. Fortunately they could not get past the door in his office to the rest of the school, and there had not been much to steal from his office. He said that the school was going to fundraise for burglar guards and suggested that our Resource Centre Committee should also make plans for better security measures. I agreed to raise these problems with the Resource Centre Committee. I also went to find S'bo. He got a fright when he saw me. He had forgotten his duty at the resource centre!



Sipho organises books

Sipho had the task of ensuring that all our empty shelves were filled with resource materials and books. His was a difficult task. Not only did he have to find the money to buy books, he also had to find the right kind of books. He had to buy books that would have the kind of information that the community wanted and needed.

He first tried to get books donated to the resource centre. A white school in town donated five boxes of old textbooks. When they told us about the books, we were excited. Textbooks in our schools were in short supply, and students needed books desperately. But when we opened the boxes, our hearts sank.

Most of the books were very old and out of date. Some were torn and scribbled all over. Thandi was furious. "Because we are black and poor, do they think we will just accept any old rubbish?" she asked. But we went through the boxes carefully. We found some tatty but useful dictionaries and twenty Std 8, 9 and 10 Mathematics and Science textbooks that were still used in the school. We saved these for the resource centre. We sold the other books to the waste centre to be recycled.

A resource centre in town had checked their shelves and they donated copies of books if they had extra copies. Many of these books we could use. Some were not useful because the language was too complicated. The resource centre

librarian also said that once we had enough money to buy our own books, we could organise a swop system with their resource centre. Each resource centre would buy books and swop them between the different resource centres every three months so that our members could have access to a wide range of books without it costing the resource centres extra money. We said that we would be happy to join the system once our resource centre was richer!

One of the political organisations agreed to donate three copies of each of their publications, speeches, magazines, newsletters, and small booklets. Sipho also approached all of the trade unions and service organisations for donations. The trade unions were happy to send five copies of every edition of their newspapers to our resource centre, because many of their members lived in Umlazi, and they wanted to inform the community of their struggles. We also received a lot of religious materials from the church. We got some pamphlets on health from the primary health care organisations, and some career pamphlets and posters from an education service organisation. Other organisations gave us copies of their brochures and posters, but said that they did not have enough money to donate any books. They hoped we would buy their materials once we had enough funds! Where we could, we always tried to get free resources by asking organisations to donate or sponsor the publications.

From the money we had fundraised, we could afford to spend R200,00 on books. It was hard to decide how to spend this money when books were so expensive and we needed so much. Busi, the librarian from the university, showed us some important reference books and how we should choose these when we buy them.

Reference books are always expensive so they are not often bought. Examples of reference books are directories, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, yearbooks, and bibliographies. They are books that can be used over and over again for very specific information. Because they are expensive, purchases should be wisely made, but do not overlook the fact that some organisations may give out cheap reference books, like the telephone directory!

Check reference books for these aspects:

- editors' credentials: are the editors experts in the subject; can their writings be trusted?
- currency: is the information up to date and still useful?
- binding: is the book strong enough for frequent use?
- clear text: is the text easy to read?
- paragraph headings: is the reader guided in the text?
- index and contents page: can information be quickly and easily found?
- frequency: is the information updated regularly?
- language level: can the text be easily understood?
- illustrations: do these explain the text well?

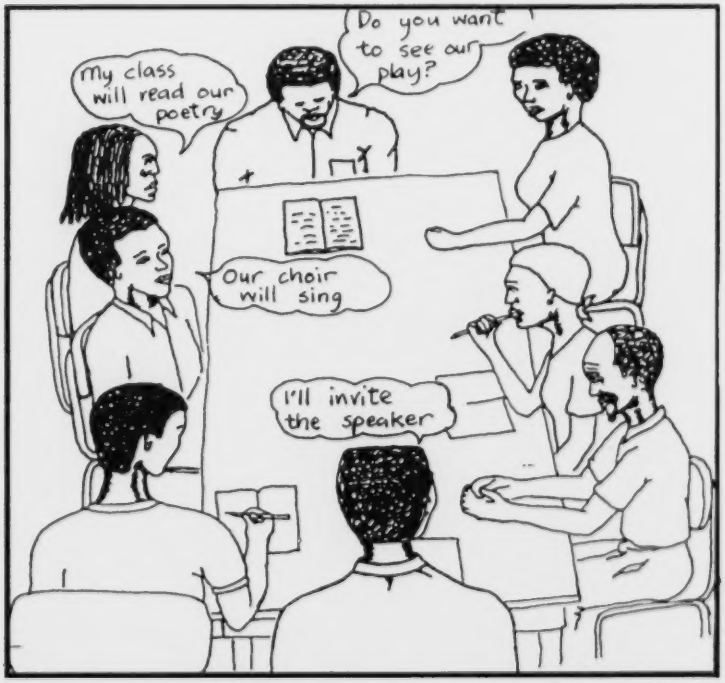
Sipho tried hard to find us books and other materials. Now our shelves were not so empty!

Cynthia co-ordinates a literacy day event

Once we had organised the resource centre, and had some books to show the community, we decided to hold our first community open day. We wanted to host activities to popularise our resource centre. The Resource Centre Committee

decided to organise a literacy day, and placed Cynthia in charge of organising the event. She tried to include different organisations in the planning and preparation so that it would not only be the work of the volunteers and the Resource Centre Committee.

Cynthia invited many organisations in the Durban area who were concerned about education to come to the meeting. At the first planning meeting, very few people arrived. We were bitterly disappointed. Why did people not come? Those at the meeting said that many meetings were taking place on that day and people had been unable to attend. Also, some people were not sure if there really was a resource centre in Umlazi. They had heard that we had plans to begin one, but were not sure if we had achieved anything. Cynthia and I laughed.



"Now you can go back and tell them that we are working hard in Umlazi and that we need everyone's support. Our resource centre will only grow with the support of the people of Umlazi and the assistance of other organisations who have experience in this work!" said Cynthia.

At the second planning meeting, many more people came. We agreed to have different activities for our literacy day. A literacy class from Inanda had written poetry and drawn pictures for their own poetry anthology. They wanted to display and sell their book. A group from St Wendolin's wanted to talk about how they had organised themselves into a literacy class. The women's choir asked if they could sing some of the songs they were rehearsing for the choir competition. One of the service organisations from Durban also told us that a well known literacy organiser and campaigner was visiting Durban at the time of the literacy day. They would ask him to tell us more about literacy in South Africa. He agreed. A literacy class from KwaMashu wanted to perform a play about how literacy had empowered them. We planned to sit outside the resource centre for the performances and talks, because we wanted people to have enough space to walk around the resource centre and see all the books and other things easily. Also, we did not think everyone would fit inside!

Literacy day was a big success. We held it from the morning on Sunday until late in the afternoon. Many people visited the resource centre and saw for the first time all the things they could

use. The literacy groups from other areas gave us many ideas. Now we also wanted to organise our own literacy class. We hoped that some school teachers would assist us.

Co-ordination and administrative procedures

Our Committee had to organise things so that the resource centre could operate efficiently. People would only use the resource centre if they could rely on it. Everyone needed to know when the resource centre was going to be open and how they could use it. These were rules and procedures that would help people to be realistic in their expectations of their resource centre.

We decided to have regular opening and closing times so that people would know when they could use the resource centre. We wanted to choose times so that people could use the books and other materials whenever they needed them. It was difficult to find a time that suited everyone. Unemployed people wanted to use the resource centre in the day. Students wanted to use it in the afternoon and evenings, and workers wanted to use it at night. We eventually decided on opening and closing times by taking a vote at a civic meeting. The time that seemed to suit most people was between 11.00 in the morning until 9.30 at night.

The problem with this was that it was a very long time, and we could not leave the centre open. Someone had to be there to help people using the centre, and ensure that our resources were well used and looked after. Because we still did not have any money, we could not employ anyone. We had to rely on volunteers.

At the next civic meeting, we asked people who wanted to volunteer as resource centre workers to come forward. Five people offered. We drew up a time-table or roster, which showed us who had to be on duty at the resource centre and at what time.

We also decided that the people who were going to run the resource centre needed to be trained, so that all of us had the same understanding of the resource centre. It was important that we would all use the same procedures for organising money, for keeping the books in place, and for organising community activities around the resource centre. We decided to spend R50,00 of the money we had raised to send the five volunteers to a training course. Everyone came back full of ideas on how to take the resource centre forward, but also more aware of the financial difficulties we faced.

The resource centre faces its first problems

We had achieved a lot in the first six months since the resource centre had begun operating. The Umlazi Civic Association had set up a resource centre using the resources of the people of Umlazi. But we also faced some problems.

While the local school had given us a large enough room, we needed to spend some money on repairing the room. We just did not have this money. We needed to get better lighting so the room could be used at night, and we needed to build a toilet and provide a wash basin.

We also needed many more books and other materials. The resource centre was now well known by the Umlazi community and people came to us all the time asking for information. The more people got to know about the resource centre the more demands they placed on us. People were becoming impatient that there was so much we could not provide. We needed equipment like a television and video machine and a photocopier.

If we wanted the resource centre to become a success, we could no longer rely on volunteer workers alone. The work of administering the centre was becoming too demanding. S'bo was not the only volunteer who had forgotten to open the resource centre. Another volunteer Edna, had a sick child and sometimes could not work. Members of the Resource Centre Committee were also beginning to find it difficult to attend to all their resource centre commitments in their spare time. We would have to employ a resource centre co-ordinator, at least on a part time basis.

As time went by and as the resource centre began to grow, we felt more frustrated with the lack of funds. We were unable to organise the resource centre as effectively as we wanted. With little money there were many things we just could not do! The Resource Centre Committee decided to raise the resource centre's financial problems at the next civic meeting and make some suggestions. We realised that now that we had set up the resource centre, we needed a much larger financial commitment. This commitment would have to be ongoing if the resource centre was to be adequately maintained and developed.

At the next civic meeting, the Resource Centre Committee proposed that if we wanted our resource centre to provide what we needed, we would have to raise a large sum of money. We would have to approach different funding organisations.

Because we had worked so hard, the civic gave us their full support to go ahead with this idea. There was still a lot of work ahead. ■

Chapter 5

We Are Rich!

At the civic meeting which evaluated how to take the resource centre forward, it was agreed that the Resource Centre Committee could approach donors and get sponsorship for a large amount of money. The Resource Centre Committee decided that we would draw up a budget and funding proposal and present these to funding organisations. Because of their experience, we decided that organising finances should be the main responsibility of Sipho and Thandi. This is how they approached donors and received funds.

Our resource centre was applying for funds for the first time so Thandi and Sipho had to prepare a new budget for the funding proposal. To help them, they asked a resource centre in Clermont to show them a copy of their budget. Sipho and Thandi used the budget of the Clermont resource centre as a guideline and extended it to meet our resource centre needs in Umlazi.

Approaching funders

We had to decide to which donor we would send our funding proposal. We applied to different donors to fund different parts of our resource centre's work. This way, if one donor turned us down, we were still able to develop other services of the resource centre. If a donor offered to cover our entire budget, we would accept this and inform the other donor organisations that we would not need their assistance for the time being.

The funding proposal

We wanted to show funders why they should give us money, so we gave them a lot of information. We attached the following information about our resource centre to the budget:

1. The name and address of the resource centre
2. A short profile and history of the Umlazi community and environment
3. A history of how the resource centre was started
4. The overall aims with short and long term objectives
5. Short progress report from the start of the project to the present
6. How we administer, supervise and account for our finances and our reporting procedures
7. A motivation outlining why we needed the funds we asked for and how we would use them
8. A workplan for the coming year showing how we would use the budget
9. Details of the staff we want to employ in the resource centre

We hoped that this information would help our potential donor to decide whether the money we were requesting was realistic, in keeping with our aims and whether we had made plans which could easily be put into practice.

The resource centre worker at the Clermont resource centre also told us that we should include our work reports and financial statements in the funding proposal. Because our resource centre was just starting, we attached letters of support from members and organisations in Umlazi.

The budget

We decided that it was the responsibility of the Resource Centre Committee, but mainly of Sipho and Thandi, to draw up the budget and funding proposal. We knew the work of the centre on a daily basis and were aware of our community's needs and aspirations, as well as our financial difficulties. But we also knew that no centre should allow one person to make all the financial decisions. Sipho and Thandi were appointed treasurers, and took care of our finances, but they were accountable to the Resource Centre Committee.

Thandi and Sipho drew up the budget as soon as they could. We knew that it might take six months for the money to be granted and sent to our account. But we were still impatient and anxious, wanting to know when we would be able to expand the resource centre and provide more services!

A budget is a forecast or prediction of the expenses for the coming year. Try to think carefully about the budget so that no unforeseen or surprise expenses occur during the year to wreck all the plans.

A budget is divided into three parts:

1. Capital costs: These items are only bought once and should last a long time eg furniture, bookshelves, typewriters, heaters and photocopiers.
2. Running or operating costs: These are costs that have to be paid regularly eg. rent, telephone, equipment maintenance, repair and cleaning.
3. Staff costs: These are all relating to staff eg. salaries, UIF, pension and medical aid contributions. Sometimes staff costs are included in running costs.

Expenses

Because we were starting up a new resource centre, we carefully listed the items we needed for the coming year. Our capital expenses were high because we had to equip our resource centre from scratch. Below are some of the items which we included in our budget:

Capital costs:

1. Building development: We needed a toilet and wash basin, burglar-proofing on the windows and door, and good locks.

2. Equipment: Because the resource centre was just starting we had to buy a lot of equipment. We divided our list into two categories: large and small equipment.

2.1 Large equipment:

Shelving / Computer and printer / Desks or work tables / Filing cabinets / Stationery cupboard / Chairs / Typewriter / Loud hailer / Photocopier

We planned to have a maintenance contract with the suppliers to ensure that the copier was regularly serviced and repaired.

2.2 Small equipment:

Waste paper bins / Medium and heavy staplers / Heavy-duty punch / Cutting board / Special rulers and pens

These were small and not that expensive, but together they add up to a lot of money.

3. Published resources

Books: We decided that we needed about 300 books to start the collection. We budgeted for new books by calculating the average cost of a very popular book that had just been published and which would be typical of the books we wanted in the resource centre. We also considered all the materials we would not be buying from publishers, but from places like service organisations.

Audio-visual resources: We also needed videos and audio cassettes.

Subscriptions: We included annual subscriptions to newspapers, magazines and journals.

Running costs:

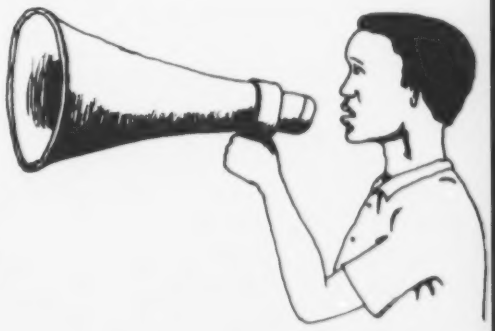
1. Rent: Because the school allowed us to use the office rent-free, we did not have to calculate how much rent we needed to pay annually, but we decided to include a contribution to the school for cleaning, electricity and water costs.

2.Telephone: When a new telephone account is opened the installation costs must be included in the budget for that year. For monthly costs we asked other resource centres about their telephone costs, and based our budget on these.

3. Postage: We budgeted for letters to bookshops and publishers, to pay accounts, and to maintain contact with other centres.

4. Photocopying: The photocopier would need paper so we tried to calculate how much paper we would use in a year.

5. Stationery and printing: We included all the items we needed on a daily basis such as: pens, pencils, rulers, tippex, glue, staples, letterheads, envelopes, complimentary slips, rubber-stamps, date stamps, inkpads, receipt books, petty cash vouchers, files, folders, storage boxes, computer paper, ribbons and disks.



6. Resource lending stationery: We wanted to lend our re-

sources out to the community, so we needed to keep a record of the loans. Busi, our university librarian, showed us a simple manual card system which we could use. We would need cards for borrowers, membership slips, and catalogue cards.

7. Media production stationery: Our resource centre would be a place where we could produce media such as small publications, posters and pamphlets, so we needed some stationery for this purpose: coloured card, paper, coloured labels and A3 sized paper.

8. Insurance: Because of the possibility of theft or fire, and because information resources and equipment are so valuable, we needed to insure everything against such risks.

9. Miscellaneous: Tea, cleaning materials, and crisis money.

Staff costs:

1. Salaries: We only wanted to employ one resource centre co-ordinator at first. We listed the annual salary and included medical aid payments, a thirteenth cheque, UIF, and a pension scheme.

2. Training: We included training for the full time worker we hoped to employ, as well as the volunteer workers who would continue to assist in the resource centre.

Costing items in the budget:

Because we were starting a new resource centre, we had to get quotations from suppliers for the capital costs. Clermont resource centre helped us by telling us which suppliers they had used.

Income

Donors would want to know whether our community could make any contribution to the costs of our resource centre. We needed to include this information in the funding proposal. Income in a resource centre is a thorny and sensitive issue.

We say that information should be free and freely available and that a collective community project should provide a free service to its community, so sponsorship of the budget is unavoidable. Every public library in capitalist and socialist countries, relies totally on subsidies from the authorities and donations or sponsorships.

Until the authorities share their finances with us and give us a subsidy, we have to find funding from other sources. Although we are a poor community we were sure that we could still make a small contribution to income.

Thandi remembered that during her visits she found that although other resource centres may be open to all members of the community, they charge a small fee to cover administration. This is not desirable, but since resource centres do not receive any subsidies, they sometimes have to use this as a form of income.

Some of the resource centres Thandi visited sell books and magazines and a small percentage of the sales remains with the resource centre. Books, cards, magazines and journals, posters, and T-shirts can be sold in a resource centre. We thought this was a good idea especially because there are hardly any bookshops in the townships and even in the city centre we cannot always find the books that our community wants to read.

A photocopier in a resource centre, if it is well

administered, can also be used to bring some income to the resource centre even while it is providing a cheap and useful service to the community. After all, resources should be shared! Another resource centre co-ordinator in the city had warned Thandi that if we wanted to make the photocopier work well for our resource centre, we needed to keep an eye open so that paper was not wasted and unnecessary copies avoided. If it was correctly used the photocopier would last a long time.

We also thought that although we believed that resources should be shared, some of the resource centre's equipment, such as a loudhailer, could be hired out to provide some income and cover repair costs.

We could also have some fundraising events such as a stall at a flea market, a competition, a raffle or a cake sale.

We estimated what money we would make from these sources of income. We hoped that we were not being over ambitious so we did not estimate that we would make too much money!

Developing a financial system

After seven months a letter came to the resource centre. It was addressed to Sipho. We knew from the envelope that it was from a donor and must be about the resource centre funds. Sipho was at school that afternoon, but we sent him a message to come to the resource centre immediately. We were too excited to wait for him until the next day! Sipho came, he was a bit grumpy at first, but once he had opened the letter, we knew that it was good news. The smile on his face was so big it stretched from ear to ear! "We are rich!" he shouted, "They have given us nearly all the money we requested." Two weeks later we heard from our other donor. They were very impressed with the work that we were doing in Umlazi and had also agreed to give us some money.

We opened a bank account in the name of our resource centre so that when the money arrived it would be deposited directly into the resource centre's account. Signatories to our account were the treasurer of the Umlazi civic and one of the Resource Centre Committee treasurers, either Thandi or Sipho. We felt we were really getting organised and were on the road to success. Nothing could stop us now!

To open a cheque/transmission account, the bank will want all the signatories of the account to bring in their identity documents and the organisation's constitution, and the minutes of the meeting when the decision was made to open an account, authorising certain people to be the signatories. A signatory is a person who is authorised to sign on behalf of the organisation. Signatories should be office bearers of the organisation. It is advisable to have at least three signatories and to instruct the bank that at least two of the authorised signatures should always appear on cheques. There will be times when one of the two signatories is out of town or ill, and then the third signatory will complete the cheque.

We began to organise written procedures and systems to control the way in which we would do things. This was specially important for our finances. We knew that without clear financial procedures, it would be very difficult to ensure that our resource centre's work was efficient or effective. Funders would not give us money again unless they were sure that the funds were being properly used. These written guidelines would also serve as a guide to the new staff member we hoped to employ. The elders in the civic also advised that money was often a source of bitter arguments and division in organisations and proper procedures would help to avoid this. Sipho and Thandi felt a heavy responsibility in handling the resource centre's money because the funds were indirectly for our whole community. The money did not belong to the signatories of the bank account. It was entrusted to us on behalf of our people.

Sipho's skills and experience were essential as we drew up our financial procedures. He showed us systems that were too complicated and others that were simple. We found that the best system is the one that is simple, easy to understand and use!

We gave ourselves some rules:

1. Keep a record of all income in a receipt book.

2. Keep a record of all expenses which are to be supported by documents such as receipts, till slips, and invoices.

3. Daily records are to be kept so that things never become muddled, too big a job or a burden.

4. Written financial reports are to be regularly sent to our civic association and our donors.

5. Only one person handles the petty cash box and key. This person is responsible to ensure that money does not go astray.

Sipho and Thandi recorded our financial system and procedures and kept a copy in our general finance file so that we would not need to rely on the resource centre co-ordinator alone to understand the financial system.

We drew up a timetable of when we had to carry out our financial procedures. We divided the timetable into daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual procedures. This enabled us to see at a glance when procedures needed to be carried out.

Administering finances

This section outlines the basic financial procedures which we adopted in our resource centre. Adapt them according to the size and organisational structure of your resource centre. If you are part of a larger organisation, then you will follow the financial procedures of your parent body.

We used four different files which we marked as follows:

1. General finances

This file we divided into six sections:

Policy documents: Copies of all our policy documents, eg. constitution outlining our aims and objectives.

Organisational procedures: Copies of our internal organisational procedures, such as budget deadlines.

Funding proposals: Previous funding proposals and budgets, and the addresses and contact names of funders.

Finance committee: Details of our resource centre's financial committee, including a list outlining the financial functions and responsibil-

ity of each committee member.
Laws: Information about laws which affect us financially eg. UIF Regulations and the Fund Raising Act.
Annual financial statement: Copies of audits and annual financial statements (This file remained empty in the beginning!).

An audit is when the organisation's financial records are inspected and checked. This is done by a qualified accountant from an auditing company. This is usually a very expensive service which is done each year at the same time. This is called the organisation's "financial year end". Some accountants or accountancy firms will give a special rate to community organisations, especially if they have some contact with that community.

2. Financial statements

We divided this file into two sections:
Monthly bank statements: We filed all the monthly bank statements in the order in which they arrived. The latest statement was always placed on top of the past statements.
Financial statements for our Resource Centre Committee, civic and donors: We kept copies of all the financial statements we drew up for the organisations to which we were accountable. We tried to draw these up monthly or at least quarterly in order to have an ongoing record of our finances. These statements were filed in the order in which they were produced, with the latest on top.

3. Invoices

This file was divided into two sections:
Accounts paid: We filed the cheque requisitions and supporting documents (account statements and invoices) with the most recent payment on top. This order therefore followed the order of the cheque number.
Accounts to be paid: Before filing, we wrote on each invoice the date when we received it. We filed all invoices as they arrived in the order in which they arrived. When a statement arrived, it was stapled to the invoices mentioned. We tried to pay accounts regularly: once or twice a month. When an account was paid, we transferred the statement and the relevant invoices attached to the Accounts Paid section.

Our resource centre has accounts with some companies in town. This means that we do not have to pay immediately for the supplies. When a company delivers things to our resource centre, a delivery note or packing slip is received. Later an invoice for the goods will arrive in the post. This invoice details the goods received and the cost of the goods. At the end of the month a statement will be received. The statement lists all the invoice numbers of invoices which the company sent during the past month, as well as any payments we may have made to them during that month and gives a total of the amount we now owe. Usually an account is paid only after the statement is received and the invoices are stapled to the correct statement. Check statements and invoices carefully to avoid paying for other people's mistakes.

4. Correspondence

We used this file to keep a record of any correspondence dealing with financial issues eg. orders and quotations. We arranged this file alphabetically.

Petty cash payments

Petty cash is for small expenses that occur on a daily basis eg. under R50,00. We recorded all small daily financial transactions in our petty cash book.

To keep a record of our petty cash we needed a petty cash book, petty cash vouchers, a cash box that locks, a float of R100,00 in cash. Every time we took money from the petty cash box, we filled in a petty cash voucher. The voucher records the date, the amount taken, the item to be bought, and the signature of the staff who bought the item. The till slip is stapled to the voucher. Receipted money must not be mixed with petty cash. When almost all the petty cash money has been used, we attach all the vouchers to a cheque requisition and request a cash cheque for the value of the vouchers. When the cheque is cashed, we add the money to the petty cash box. This brings the petty cash float to the full amount of R100,00 cash again.

Cheque payments

Sipho insisted that cheque requisitions were essential office stationery. We had some requisition forms printed. They recorded the date, the name of the person or organisation who would receive the cheque, the reason for the payment, the item on the budget to which it relates, and the cheque number. The requisition should be stapled to the account statement and invoices which are to be paid with that particular cheque. The staff requesting the cheque must sign the requisition, as well as the signatory who authorised the cheque payment. Once the cheque is posted, the requisition must be filed in the Accounts Paid file.

Receipting money

All money received is recorded in a receipt book. The money is kept locked in a cash box (not the same one as petty cash). Money is banked regularly to avoid cash being left in the resource centre.

Legislation

When Sipho and Thandi were raising funds for the resource centre, they had to find out about the fundraising laws. We were not sure of all our rights, and so we went to a lawyer to get legal advice. We found that the Fund Raising Act states that donations cannot be received from the public unless our resource centre has a fundraising number. Although our members could donate funds at any time, if we were raising funds from a donor here or overseas, we had to ensure that we did not break the law and risk the future of our resource centre.

We also had to familiarise ourselves with the legislation relating to employees such as UIF contributions and taxation. We got our information from the Department of Manpower and the Receiver of Revenue. The Legal Resources Centre was also very helpful. We also found some useful booklets about organisations and employees. These booklets answered many of our questions about the law and running a community organisation. ■

Chapter 6

Putting Things in Place

When we lost courage to start our resource centre, Ma Zuma had said that we must start with what we had. We heeded her, and now the resource centre was a living testimony to her words of wisdom. Our resource centre was growing. Everyone began talking about it as "our resource centre." Our civic association now held up our achievements in the resource centre as an example of what we could do if we worked together. The Committee felt so proud. We had helped build the power of the Umlazi community.

But our days of gloating were short lived. The civic association soon gave us more hard work! They agreed that it was time to employ a co-ordinator. They said we would have to decide on the responsibilities, tasks, and salary. We co-opted Busi to the Committee to help us.

Preparing to employ a co-ordinator

At the next Resource Centre Committee meeting, we worked out a procedure for employing a co-ordinator. First, we drew up a list of the responsibilities we thought should be included. Everyone wanted to add different tasks to the list!

Cynthia wanted the co-ordinator to assist with literacy classes and other education tutorials. Busi said it was important to find someone who was methodical and could organise the resources into good order. Thandi reminded us of the finances and administration. Nomsa said the community needed someone who could give advice. Sipho argued that these were all important tasks, but most importantly we needed someone with skill and ability.

It almost seemed we were looking for perfection. Sipho convinced us that we should consider qualities of firmness, initiative, decision-making, the ability to work without supervision and being sensitive to the needs of our community. Previous experience would be useful. Our co-ordinator really needed to understand the role of a resource centre in our community.

The Clermont and Durban resource centres suggested a salary scale. We then went back to our budget and checked to see how much we could afford. We then decided on a figure which

included some employment benefits.

Up to this point we had not needed a Conditions of Service document, but Jabu, a seasoned trade unionist, said it was essential now that our Committee would be employing someone. We did not want accusations that we were exploiting anyone! Our Draft Conditions of Service outlined our responsibilities as employers and those of the co-ordinator. Once we had employed someone, we hoped they would work with us to refine the draft document. We also drew up a 12 month contract because we only had funds for one year. The contract could be renewed if more funds were received.

The advertisement and interviews

The next step was to advertise the vacancy. We decided only to advertise in Durban because we wanted someone who lived in the area, and who understood our community needs and difficulties.

Sipho drafted an advert. At the top it gave the name of the position and listed the work to be done. Next the advert said what kind of person we wanted. Interested people were asked to send us a list of their schooling and past work experiences and the names of two people who knew them well. We wanted their applications before the end of that month. At the bottom of the advert Sipho had written our address at the school. I joked that it looked like we were becoming "bosses", but Jabu said if we were not organised, then we were disorganised. For sure, we did not want that accusation!

Our advert was sent to all the organisations in Umlazi and a popular newspaper. Copies were also put on notice boards at other resource centres.

Within no time replies started arriving. We were surprised to see how many people responded. "It is not often," wrote one applicant, "that one can work for one's community and also get paid for it!"

Together our Committee went through all the applications. We could see that many were not suitable. Some did not understand what it meant to work in a community organisation. Some did not have the right skills. We decided to draw up a short list by reading their applications and matching these to the job descriptions. Soon we found that we only had six names. A date was set for interviews. Thandi contacted the people on our short list and made appointments for the interviews.

We also had to decide on who would make the final decision. This was so important that we felt it should be made by the civic association as well. So we requested a civic representative to join us for the interviews.

During the interviews we found that the candidates were all keen to develop our resource centre, but eventually we chose Thembeka Khumalo. Thembeka had been a shopsteward in a clothing company but had recently been retrenched. She was also very active in our civic association. Most of us knew her well for her reliability. The interviewing panel decided to employ Thembeka because she had many of the skills for the job, and she understood resource centre work. But, best of all, she knew our Umlazi community. Cynthia wrote letters to the other applicants, telling them that they had been unsuccessful.

Appointing a co-ordinator

Thembeka agreed to start work at the beginning

of the next month. Just before that date, the Resource Centre Committee had a meeting with Thembeka. We gave her a letter appointing her to the position of co-ordinator and discussed the job description, contract and conditions of service with her. Thembeka made some suggestions. We were pleased, it seemed as if we had employed the right person! We agreed that the Committee and co-ordinator would meet four times a year. We would assist her in planning resource centre developments, and she could bring any problems about her job to us. She would also give us progress reports. Thembeka was happy that the volunteers would continue to help her in the resource centre.

The co-ordinator starts work

Hey ta! its me, Thembeka Khumalo. When I heard of my appointment as the resource centre co-ordinator, I was bursting with enthusiasm to start working. First I started organising the office.

My job was made much easier from the beginning because I had been active in the civic association. I had not worked in the Resource Centre Committee, because I was busy fighting my retrenchment. But everytime I went to civic meetings I carefully listened to the reports from the Resource Centre Committee. I can say as a member of our community that I knew our expectations of the resource centre. My task was to put some of these expectations and needs into practice. This was not always an easy task!

I began my work by defining certain priorities for my job. Our room at the school really only had a skeleton of resources and equipment.

1. I wanted to buy the essential things for the office as well as some more resources. Since our Literacy Day so many people were coming to borrow reading materials.

2. Once the books and materials were in the resource centre, they had to be arranged in a simple way so that people could easily choose what they wanted.

3. Administration needed attention. More procedures needed to be added to the financial guidelines which Sipho had drawn up. We needed basic equipment to run the office.

I made a list of everything the resource centre needed and marked off the things the Committee had already bought.

Buying stationery and equipment

There were some essential items needed. I made a long list of these. I asked Thandi and Sipho to help me with these purchases. For some of the more expensive items, we had to get quotes and advice. We wanted to spend money carefully and wisely because it had to last at least one year. Some media experts advised us that the cheapest equipment was not always the best in the long run.

When we went to town I was excited. Ever since I was a little girl I had liked going shopping. Thandi carried the cheque book and I kept the quotations neatly together in an old envelope. We went to a discount shop where we could buy our stationery, furniture and television.

After we had placed our orders, our spirits were much lower. Everything was so expensive. We were determined not to be wasteful. I would have to be very firm and careful with the way things were used in the resource centre. If we all wanted to share these resources, we had to take care of them well. We were very thoughtful as we rode home in the taxi.

After a few days all the purchases we had made were delivered. When we were ready to buy the photocopier the salesman would visit our resource centre so I would not have to go to town again.

Arranging the room

While I waited for the delivery of the books and equipment, I made some plans. I thought carefully about how we would use the space we had. How were we going to fit all our new equipment into the resource centre? This was a challenge! I made a few rough sketches before asking S'bo, our volunteer, to help me move the heavy things.

First I decided on the best place for my work area. I wanted to be able to see the door, the shelves and the reading area from my table. I needed to take special care of the expensive equipment and check who was using it. I also wanted to keep our stationery supplies neatly locked away to be used only when we needed them.

I was very happy that I could now move the big wooden box out of the resource centre and begin working from a desk! Busi called this the issue desk because this was where we kept the

members' cards and wrote down things that were borrowed and returned.

I decided that noisy equipment like the photocopier should be in a place where it would not disturb readers.

People wanted a display and notice board to advertise events, vacancies and other community information. I divided the display board into two sections, one side for resource centre news and the other for community notices.

Near the electricity plug we had an area for media production and the computer equipment. The Committee wanted me to use the computer so they were planning a training course for me. We decided that because the computer was so valuable we would only allow those who already knew how to use a computer to do so. On the table I placed some scissors, glue and a long ruler for making posters, notices and newsletters. S'bo doubted that these things would remain there so he tied them to the table leg with some string.

Cynthia, one of our most caring mothers, came with a beautiful pot plant for our window and in the early evening Jabu stopped by the resource centre on his way home from work. His union federation had made a colourful poster and he put it up on a wall. I was proud how lovely everything looked. The Committee complimented me.

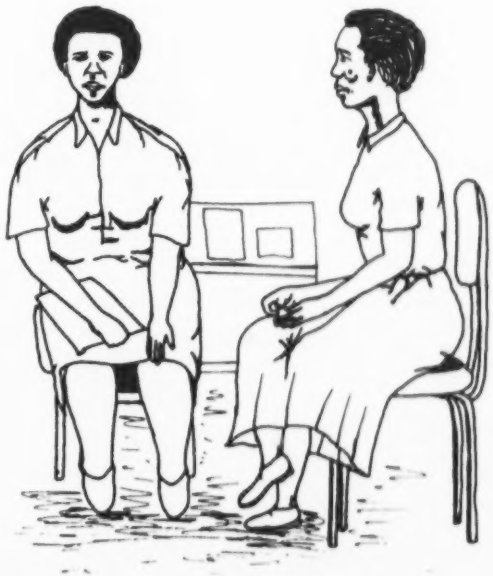
Choosing books

Everyday someone asked for a book or video we did not have. It seemed everyone was thirsty for knowledge! We needed more resources and the budget had made provision for many books, magazines, newspapers and videos. I did not feel confident to buy so many resources. Busi offered to help me. She said that before rushing ahead to buy everything that we saw in the bookshop, we should make some notes. She asked me:

1. Who will choose the resources?
2. What are our aims?
3. What type of resources do we want to buy?
4. How much money is available?

When I had finished answering these questions we wrote down the titles that people were requesting. From the replies to Cynthia's questionnaire, we wrote down the general idea of what people said they wanted. We remembered our aims and thought of the people in our township. Busi said that we were developing a "selection policy".

We thought of different types of resources that we wanted and then the subjects that people were interested in. There were so many topics.



We decided to look for resources about childcare, history, politics, sport, African literature, political economy, health care, and bursaries. Although we had many students visiting us, there were small children as well as many unemployed adults who wanted cassettes and videos, and everyday people were asking for more newspapers. We had to choose resources for everyone.

Using these notes, Busi wrote some guidelines for buying books. She said these would help us choose resources.

1. Check the level of the language: is the language suitable?

2. Lay-out: is the print easy to read?

3. Illustrations: are they clear, helpful and make the book more enjoyable?

4. Cover: is it attractive and inviting? Can you see the title on the spine of the book when it is standing on the shelf?

5. Binding: is it strong enough to survive frequent use?

6. Balanced information: is the information reliable or biased?

7. Current information: is the information stale or up-to-date?

I realised that although I knew how to run an office, there was so much that I still had to learn about resources. Busi agreed to introduce me to a few basic points, but suggested that I would need some training in the future. I was reassured that as I went along I would also learn the essential ways of handling resources and information.

Before we went to visit the bookshops and the small publishing units of the service organisations, Busi and I talked about the different kinds of books. Again I made some notes because I wanted to go through these things with our volunteers as well.

Fiction books and resources are stories which are not true. They may be novels or short stories.

Non-fiction means "not fiction". These resources include true stories, like biographies, and all other types of information which are not fiction. This includes information about health, work, people, history, science, education, law, the environment, and even ideas of how society is organised. Literature like drama and poetry is also included in non-fiction.

Many of the things we needed could not be bought in a bookshop. We needed posters, resource packs, audiovisual materials, newsletters and magazines. For these we would have to go to the service and research organisations.

While we visited the bookshops Busi showed me different parts of a book which would give me information to guide me as I made my choice.

The title page gives the title, sub-title (if there is one), who is responsible for the information (eg. the author or editor or illustrator) and the name of the publisher.

On the next page more publishing details are written including the copyright date which indicates when the text was written and/or published.

The table of contents lists the different sections of the book.

Many well researched books will include an index at the back. This is an alphabetical list of subject headings mentioned in the book. The reader is then guided to the exact page where

that subject is mentioned.

On the back cover or just inside the cover there may be a short summary or hint to tell the reader what the book is about. This is called the blurb.

At the bookshops there were so many books. I saw big books with beautiful colour illustrations, but these were expensive and many of them were not at all relevant to our readers' interests. I could not manage without Busi when it came to reference books. Sipho had bought one or two before I was employed, but we needed many more specially for our students. After carefully going through the shelves, checking the notes I had made and discussing each one with Busi, I had a pile of books put aside. Making my choice was not always easy. I decided that to help me in the future I would keep a book on the resource centre issue desk for people to write the names of resources they wanted.

When we came to the cashier to arrange payment for the books, Busi suggested that we should open an account. If there were some special books which we wanted, we could then phone the bookshop and place an order. Once the bookshop got to know our needs and interests, they would also send us new publications as they arrived. We could look at these and decide if we wanted to buy them. I thought that was a fine idea because I would not always be able to take off time to go to town.

Busi said that the number of copies of books and videos that should be bought would depend on the popularity of the subject. We bought double copies of some of the reference books for students because we knew that they would be using them every day.

We did not buy everything at the bookshop. Next we went to see what was available at the service organisations. Their publications were very relevant and simply written, and covered more of the subjects we wanted. To buy copies of videos we had to go to a special service organisation. Since I was starting the video collection, I bought one copy of every video in their catalogue. That sounds impressive, but really there were only twelve videos!

We were tired and heavily laden with boxes and parcels as we drove back to Umlazi in Busi's car. Shopping was also an exhausting business. While I had been away, some of the volunteers had taken care of the resource centre. When we returned from town, they helped us unpack the car. Others who watched us began to clap their hands as they realised that their resource centre was going to enjoy such abundance.

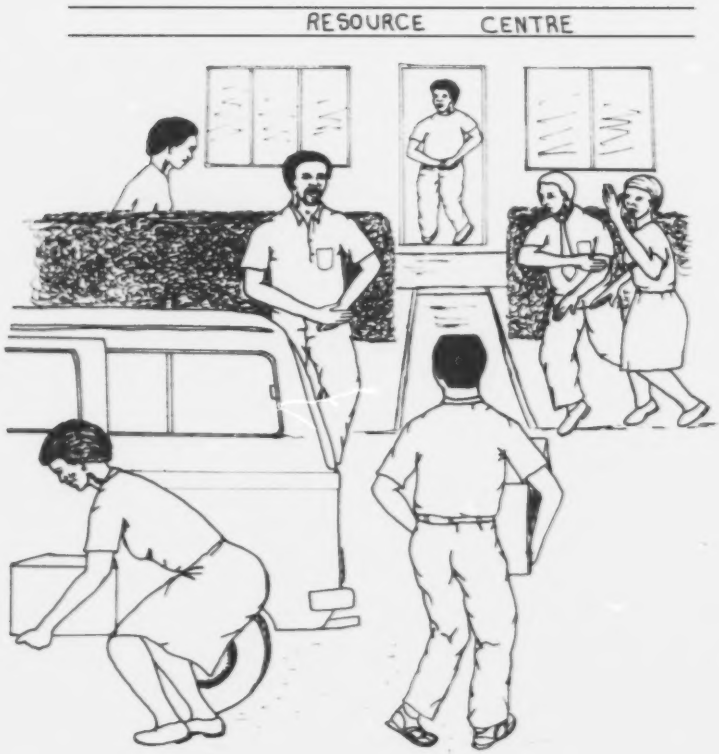
Other resources

It was one afternoon, a few weeks later, that one of the students came in with a newspaper and showed me a review of a new book. She asked if we could buy it. I asked her to write it in the notebook on the issue desk. I realised that visiting the bookshop was not the only place I would find out about new books. I began to read newspapers more carefully.

I mentioned this to Busi. She said that there were quite a few places where we could find information about new resources because bookshops cannot possibly keep copies of every single published book.

1. Newspaper and magazine reviews

2. Publishers' lists (called a catalogue)
Publishers, eg. COSAW, Sached Trust, Skotaville,



Ravan and Buchu Books, will post their catalogues to anyone on request.

3. Directories
Bridge and The green pages are examples of useful directories that list resource organisations in South Africa. Always check that directories are up-to-date.

4. Catalogues
Catalogues, such as the ERIS video catalogues, list resources available on loan or for sale from places all over South Africa.

5. Libraries
Libraries will sometimes distribute a list of the books which they have recently bought. It may be useful to consult this list.

6. Organisations
Posters, newsletters, speeches and conference papers are examples of documents which may never be formally published, but which may be interesting and useful to some readers and community workers. These organisations are usually willing to add a resource centre to their mailing list.

Membership

Before I had been employed as the resource centre co-ordinator, the volunteers had assisted with the everyday work of the resource centre. The Committee had developed some basic rules, like opening and closing times, but they had not developed an overall plan for running the resource centre. It was left to me to develop more procedures which would assist the resource centre to run efficiently. I wanted to begin lending resources to our community as soon as possible, so we started membership procedures.

The Resource Centre Committee had recommended that we should have a membership fee of R5,00 per year. I needed to keep a list of our members and their addresses so that we could contact them when necessary. I drafted a sample of a membership form and arranged for it to be printed on cards.

Arranging the resources

As I was unpacking the boxes of books, my thoughts were going in circles. How was I going to arrange the resources so that people could find what they wanted? I needed to arrange them in a way that they could find them easily on their

own. And I had to make a record of all our resources so that we knew what we had in the resource centre.

The next time I spoke to Thandi I asked her about her visits to the resource centres and if she knew the systems they used. She remembered some details but thought that each resource centre had used a different system. She suggested I should ask Sipho about the systems the public and school libraries were using. Thandi also said that I should visit the resource centres again to ask their advice, or maybe Busi would have some suggestions to make.

Sipho remembered the systems in the libraries. He said that although the librarians seemed to know how everything was arranged on the shelves, he knew many students who complained that they never knew where to find information. They were always confused and had to ask for help. I decided it was time for me to ask Busi again for advice and to pay another visit to the resource centres in town.

I saw some very complicated systems when I visited the resource centres and libraries. Many libraries liked to use the Dewey Decimal Classification System but it seemed quite confusing to me. Some resource centre workers in Durban told me about other systems and reminded me that there were many people who found this part of resource work very difficult. They said that many people only feel confident after some training. I was confused by all the systems and their names but I did not have time to wait for a training course. People were waiting to read those books. I had to start a system as soon as possible.

For some days I tried to run away from my problem. I found other work to do in the resource centre. I did not have the confidence to organise

RESOURCE CENTRE MEMBER		
Name:		
Address: Tel:		
School/Work:		
Year Paid	Year Paid	Year Paid

the books. I knew I needed to talk to Busi again. When I finally asked her, she was more than willing to share her experience and skills.

First we talked about why we needed a system. That was easy: so we could find the information. I just could not think of a system for us. Busi then startled me by asking me if I would like to go shopping with her. In the supermarket we walked along looking for tea, milk, bread, and a big hard-covered book. Busi asked me to look around at the shelves. I looked at all the supermarket notices above each aisle, and the way that the aisles were divided so that goods were organised into different sections. I laughed to myself! Once a month I went shopping, but today I saw the supermarket through different eyes! Busi then said some wise words. "Don't try and re-invent the wheel, Thembeka. Many people down through the years have been using systems. Let us use the basic ideas in the systems and apply them simply to our situation."

I felt relieved. Now I did not feel so alone. Busi explained that when we are dealing with resources there are four smaller systems which work together to form the whole information system. These are the register, classification, cataloguing and lending systems.

Soon we were deciding how we wanted the systems to work for us. I said that we needed to arrange the shelves and have a list of all our resources. I also needed to know if resources had been borrowed, and who had borrowed them. I did not want the system to take up too much of my time and everyone must be able to use it. I thought I was asking for an impossible dream but Busi said we would take things one step at a time. She also said that we should not begin to lend out resources until the system was ready.

The register

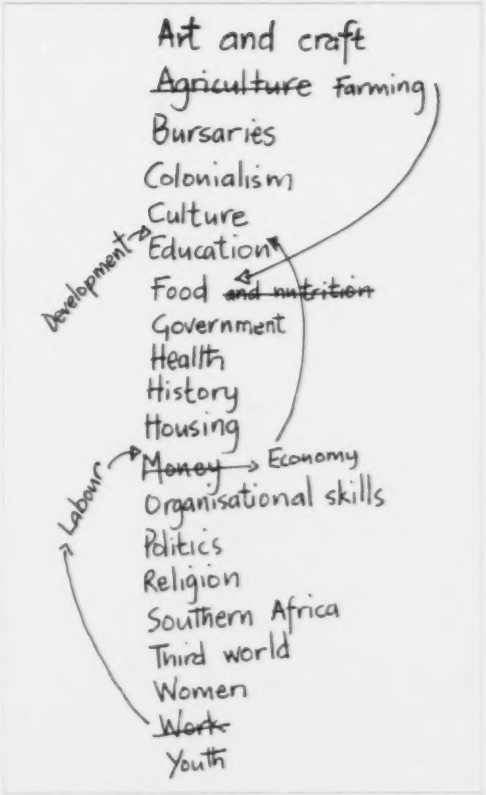
We decided to start with the books. First we opened the boxes and stamped all the resources with our address stamp to show who the book belonged to. Secondly Busi took out the hard-covered book from her shopping. We began to make a list of all the resources. We wrote the date, the title and author, and the cost of the book. I started to call this our register.

Classifying the resources

Next we separated the fiction books from the non-fiction. I enjoyed this and it helped me become familiar with all the titles. By this time it was late. Busi and I made arrangements to meet again and continue discussing the system.

Fiction shelves

We met again on a Saturday when Busi had many hours to spare. We started with the fiction



books. Busi said that almost always these were arranged alphabetically by author. It did not take us long to put them on a shelf in this way. Our readers would not realise that this was the order, so we made some neatly written shelf guides. For each book I also neatly wrote the first three letters of the author's last name on a small label and stuck it at the bottom of the spine.

Non-fiction shelves

Busi had brought along four lists of subject headings from other resource centres and she

also had a big librarians' classification book. Our aim was to divide non-fiction books so that those on education would be together and those on health, and so on. We first read through the list of headings. Some of the headings were clumsy and complicated. We tried to simplify them so that everyone would understand them. We decided not to code the subjects by number because it would make our shelves more complicated and confusing.

After three hours of discussion and consulting all the lists, we had two pages of subject headings for our resource centre. Busi said that in the future when we eventually use the computer, we could add to this list and refine it. It was late in the afternoon when we marked the shelves and put each book on its correct shelf. As the book went on the shelf I wrote its subject in pen on the inside cover so that in the future the volunteers and I could always open the cover, read the subject heading and return it to the correct shelf.

Just before we locked up, Busi advised me to divide the rest of the resources according to their form and then we would return to this discussion another day. The following week I put all the newsletters and magazines together and all the videos together. As I worked I decided to arrange the magazines alphabetically according to their titles on a shelf. I phoned Busi about this and she said that it was the correct method but I must remember to keep them in their date order with the most recent copy on the top of the pile. S'bo was helpful to go through the magazines again to rearrange them in this way.

Cataloguing the collection

Before Busi and I met again she phoned and gave me a shopping list. She asked me to order many index cards, three index boxes, three sets of alphabetical dividers, book pockets, cards, date sheets and glue. I had seen these often in other libraries and resource centres.

When the index cards and boxes were delivered to the resource centre, I phoned Busi to make arrangements for her to help me again. She suggested that the volunteers should come and help us and that we should start early in the morning one weekend.

Not all the volunteers were able to come and work on the cataloguing that weekend, but

Cynthia was there with her little girl, and S'bo. Soon Busi also arrived.

We listened carefully as Busi explained what we would be doing. We were going to use a card system until we started a computerised system. It was fairly cheap, simple and easy to use, but there were many things which it could not do like a computerised system. Until we were more developed we would use the card system.

Busi gave names to the three index boxes: Title, Author and Subject. For each fiction book we were going to fill two cards with information about the book. One card was for the title box and another card for the author box. We would do the same for the non-fiction books except to have a third card for the subject box. If a non-fiction book could also be placed on the shelf of another subject heading, then we wrote out an additional card for that subject.

On each of these cards Busi said we should write

1. title
2. author
3. publisher
4. publication date

She said that many libraries and resource centres use more detailed information on their cards, but at the moment this was not needed in our resource centre.

When writing a subject card we would write the subject heading in capitals in the top right-hand corner. On the author card we would write the author's name in capitals again above the title.

This system seemed simple and easy to use. Busi said goodbye and left us to spend the rest of the day working with the cards. Cynthia banged away on our secondhand typewriter while S'bo and I got writer's cramp. We worked hard because we were determined to start lending books soon. But Busi had said that the system was not finished yet! I had to be patient for a few more days.

Lending resources

It took a long time for all the catalogue cards to be written. In the future we would do them as we received new resources and it would not be such a heavy task.

When Busi and I had first discussed what we needed from a system, I had said that I needed to know if one of our resources had been lent out and who had it. This part of the system would be the last stage.

Busi did not take long to explain the tasks involved in this stage. We had to paste date

sheets onto the first or back page of each book, depending on how the book had been printed. (When we worked with videos we would paste the sheet inside the plastic box which protects the video.)

On the inside cover of each book we pasted a pocket. Into each pocket went a card on which we had neatly written the title and author of the book.

Our lending procedure was simple. If someone wanted to borrow a book, she brought the book to the issue desk. The card was taken out of the book and the person's name and date was written on the card. We had a box in which we placed the cards in bundles according to the date when the books should return. The return date was then stamped on the date sheet inside the book.

When the book was brought back to the resource centre, the card would return to the correct pocket and the book would be reshelved. If a book was not back by its return date, we would check the name of the borrower to contact them and remind them to return the book.

I was thinking about the system we were starting. Each stage on its own seemed quite simple and common sense. All the stages taken together worked to achieve our goals. We were doing very simple practical jobs, but the system had required such a lot of thinking. Our system was now set up for books. We had videos, posters, equipment and many other resources which people wanted to borrow and we had to think of how we would adapt our system for those different types of resources.

Some resources, like reference books, journals, and newspapers, could only be used in the resource centre. For other resources, like novels, children's books and the non-fiction books, we

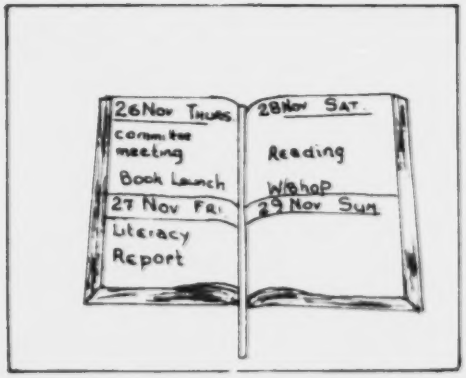
allowed members to take them home to read for two weeks.

We also allowed people to use the television and video recorder away from the resource centre, but they were only allowed to do so overnight, because many students used it during the day. It was also a very expensive resource. We wanted people to use it freely, but we also knew that we had to be careful to prevent carelessness. In our procedures, we tried to balance free use, with care and control over the equipment.

Organising myself

Even though I had now been employed, there was a lot of work that the volunteers still did. Together, we worked out a list of the work they did and drew up a roster for the evenings so that I was not on duty every night.

I wanted to organise my time in the resource centre so that I used it profitably. I had many different tasks to do and I did not want to run around doing a lot of tasks, and achieving



nothing. To stop this happening, I made a list of the things I had to do daily, weekly and monthly. Then I did not worry that I may forget something. It was all written down.

Everyday I used my diary, making a list of the things that needed attention that day. I marked these off as I did them. I made notes of what happened during the day so that when I prepared my report for the Resource Centre Committee, I would be able to remember things. My diary was also useful for noting important dates and events. I could then prepare for them, perhaps making a display or some other activity.

There were occasions when things got hectic, resources were not brought back in time, or the children became noisy, but the volunteers always helped me cheerfully. The resource centre was busy from the moment we opened in the morning. People were using the resources to the full and as I went home at night I felt exhausted but content with the work I had done that day. When the Resource Centre Committee and Busi complimented me on my efficiency and good management I felt really proud! ■

Conclusion

Let's Party!

At the next meeting of the Resource Centre Committee, I reported on the progress of my work to date. Everyone was pleased. We had begun discussing the idea of a resource centre at a civic meeting almost a year ago. Now, the resource centre was running smoothly and we had three hundred members. The resource centre was being used by young and old, employed and unemployed. Many community organisations were also using the resource centre.

Sipho suggested that it was now time to organise a celebration of all we had achieved. He said we should have an evening where we opened the resource centre to all, displayed all our materials, and invited other groups to perform. Sipho did not have to convince anyone! We all wanted a party! The Resource Centre Committee decided that we should have the celebration before people went home to their families in the rural areas for Christmas.

I started planning quite a long time ahead. I had to make the practical arrangements of organising the party. Our resource centre was not like a big company with an entertainment

allowance, so we had to raise funds for our party. Because I was very busy with other resource centre work, I hoped that the resource centre volunteers would help but only one volunteer could do so. All the others we too busy studying for their exams. I began to worry. I could not let the committee down, especially with such an important occasion. Then Busi suggested that I ask community organisations to assist me with fundraising and other responsibilities for the party. I would then only have to organise the resource centre events.

I contacted some organisations and invited them to a planning meeting. I asked them to come with suggestions for any activities, and to offer help where they could. About eight organisations came. Everyone put forward suggestions and ideas.

We agreed that the resource centre would be open from late in the afternoon with lots of displays and books for all to see. The artists' organisation volunteered to display their work. They just needed me to help with finding display boards. Someone suggested that we ask the youth choir to sing and the writers' organisation to recite their poetry. After this, we would have a big party outside with food and drink for everyone.

I was relieved when the stokvel association said they would organise all the fundraising. The soccer club volunteered to transport elderly people, and a church group said that they would help prepare food. We all cheered when some musicians agreed to provide free music for the party.

A week later, I went to visit Mrs Sigodi from the stokvel. I asked her if they were having any success with fundraising.

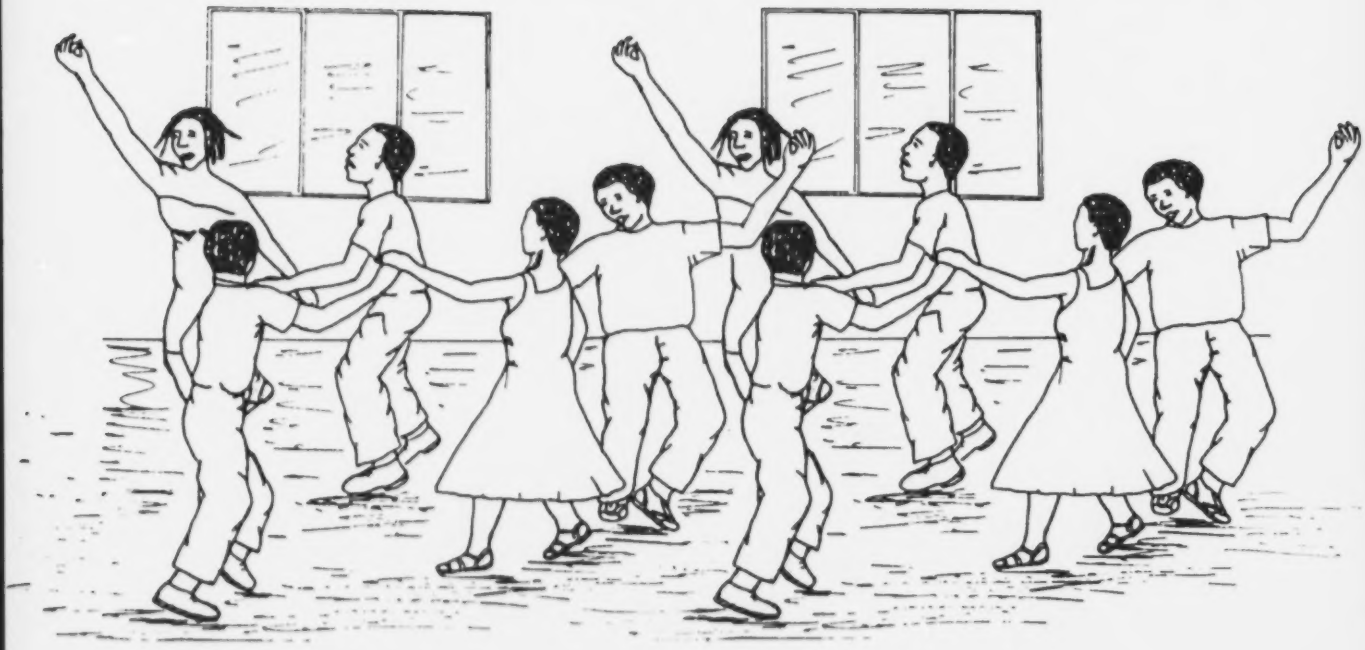
"Yes" she said "I am very proud of myself. You know how tight Mr Ngema at the butchery is. But he has promised two sheep for the party!"

I laughed, "Well, now we really do have a community resource centre. Even the business-men in Umlazi are supporting us!"

On the day of the Open Evening, Sophie, a volunteer, was assisting me. We were running around like two scalded cats. We did not think we would ever be ready. In the afternoon, we closed the resource centre so that we could complete preparations. Then, at half past four, I looked around. Everything looked wonderful. Sophie and I went home to wash and dress up for the party.

That Friday evening was one that I will not forget in a long time. The artists' paintings and the poetry spoke of our struggles in Umlazi. They described the pain, suffering, oppression, resistance, joy, laughter and power of our community. The youth choir then lifted our spirits. Their songs put hope in our hearts, and gave us courage to build our own future. But it was Ma Zuma who stood up at the end, and put into words what we were all feeling about our resource centre.

"This night is one we are all proud of." she said. "We dreamed of a resource centre, we planned, and we even began to doubt our own abilities. But now through our hard work and dedication, we no longer have a dream. Look around you. Here we stand in our own resource centre. This is what we built. Everything in this room is here because of our efforts. Our resource centre is more than a room full of books and materials that the community can use. Our resource centre is alive to the power and courage of the people of Umlazi. In all our hard work we



only forgot to do one thing. We never named our resource centre. I name it ULWAZI in honour of every person who has built our dream. Amandla!"

Of course! Ulwazi Resource Centre. Ulwazi is information and knowledge. That was a good name for our resource centre.

After we had sung the national anthem we went outside and had the biggest party Umlazi had seen for a long time. We danced, ate, laughed and celebrated until the sun rose. Our musicians played jazz, kwela and soul. They played music for everyone. The church group had prepared a feast for us. We had three sheep, and three goats, vegetables, salads and even huge plates of pudding! We celebrated for so long that I even saw some people leaving to go to their morning shift from the party!

I will not disappoint you, dear reader, our story ends happily. Many romances, they say, were cemented at that party! Yes, it's true. Our resource centre really did serve to bring together the Umlazi people! ■

Appendix I

Glossary

AIM The overall intention, goal, or purpose, to which all the resource centre objectives and activities are directed. An aim is ongoing and cannot be measured. It is usually expressed in a phrase starting with a verb (eg. To develop the community).

ANTHOLOGY A printed collection of literature. (eg. Anthology of South African poetry)

CATALOGUE A list, usually in alphabetical order, of resources. (eg. ERIS video and film catalogues).

CATALOGUING The process of describing a resource, both physically and in content, so that the resource can be found again in the future.

CLASSIFICATION The process of defining the subject/s of a resource so that resources with the same subjects are grouped together, and separated from resources on other subjects, and so that the resource can be found again in the future. Classification systems are used in this process. (eg. Dewey Decimal Classification system).

COMMUNITY People living in one area (eg. Umlazi), or having a common characteristic (eg. speaking the same language).

EVALUATION The process of critically reviewing a matter in terms of its aims and objectives.

GREY LITERATURE Documents which have not been formally published. The document may be a photocopy and it may not be clear who is responsible for the content of the document. Grey literature is sometimes known as low-flying literature (avoiding the "radar" of state censorship) or informal literature. (eg. brochures, pamphlets, handbills, conference papers, meeting programmes, etc.)

INDEPENDENT Free from the control of another organisation; not having to rely on others. (eg. an independent resource centre).

INFORMATION Knowledge gained through

experience or study. Information can be recorded and shared through various media.

METHOD A strategy used to achieve one's objectives; also the way of doing an activity, the procedure (eg. to encourage children to read by having a storytelling and reading event).

LIBRARY A building which houses a collection of books and other literary materials, kept for reference and borrowing. There are different types of libraries: public, academic and specialised libraries which focus on a specific subject, media, or users. Libraries are not-for-profit organisations, generally funded and controlled by city, provincial or central government authorities.

LITERACY The ability to use , understand and interpret media (eg. writing and written language).

MEDIA The form in which information is communicated (eg. newspapers, posters, books, videos, etc).

OBJECTIVE A specific programme of action designed to achieve one's aims. Objectives may be long or short term and can be measured (eg. in time, quantity etc) for evaluation (eg. By Friday all the books will be classified and catalogued).

PARENT BODY A senior organisation which has founded and developed another junior organisation; the new organisation is answerable to the parent body which may provide funds and control (eg. The civic association is the parent body of the resource centre).

PRINCIPLE The standard, rule or general truth which guides motives, actions and decisions (eg. Information must be available to everyone).

PROACTIVE A style and approach to work, anticipating or foreseeing a need, situation or crisis, and initiating an appropriate action, instead of only reacting to the situations after they have occured (eg. to prepare a resource pack on democracy before a general election).

QUESTIONNAIRE A set of questions on a form which will be answered by a number of people in order to collect information.

REPACKAGE The process of preparing resource packs.

REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE A number of examples which will reflect or represent the trend of the whole group.

RESOURCE CENTRE A space or building in which information resources in a variety of media (eg. books, journals, newspapers, film, slides, video and audio cassettes, three-dimension objects, etc.) and equipment (eg. recorders, cameras, computers, photocopiers, printers, fax machines etc) are arranged in a way to encourage information distribution, production and skills sharing. A resource centre incorporates community involvement and participation at all levels and are often funded by non-government organisations. (Please note: the term "resource centre" is popular and sometimes used for advice offices, media and research services.)

RESOURCE PACK A collection of documents, possibly in various media, on a particular subject or theme (eg. elections), often designed for specific users. The documents may be photo-copies, translations or a rearrangement of other original materials. Resource packs are put together to be used in an educational situation, both formal and non-formal. Worksheets and discussion questions may be included.

SELECTION POLICY The agreed principles and rules which will be a guide in the process of selecting resources. Generally, this is a written document.

SERVICE ORGANISATION A not-for-profit organisation which offers a specific service to the community (eg. advice, development aid and training).

Appendix II

List of Resource Organisations

1. RESOURCE CENTRE FORUMS

In some city centres, resource centre workers meet to discuss issues relating to their work.

Inter Resources Forum
c/o SACHED Trust
5 Church Street
Mowbray 7700
Tel: (021) 686-8615
Fax: (021) 686-8532

Durban and Pietermaritzburg Resource Centre Forum
c/o Room 55 Ecumenical Centre
20 St Andrews Street
Durban 4001
Tel: (031) 307-8642
Fax: (031) 301-6611

Johannesburg Resource Centre Network
c/o South African Council of Churches Library
P O Box 4921, Johannesburg 2000
Tel: (011) 492-1380
Fax: (011) 492-1448

Port Elizabeth Resource Centre Forum
c/o SACHED Trust
4th Floor Alpin House
570 Main Street
North End
Port Elizabeth 6001
Tel: (041) 54- 3738
Fax: (041) 54-6207

2. ORGANISATIONS OFFERING TRAINING TO COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

1. RESOURCE CENTRE TRAINING

Community Resource Centre Training Project (CRCTP)
Room 55 Ecumenical Centre
20 St Andrews Street
Durban 4001
Tel: (031) 307-8642
Fax: (031) 301-6611

2. COMMUNITY ORGANISATION TRAINING

Community Services Training Project (CSTP)
University of Natal
King George V Avenue
Durban 4001
Tel: (031) 816-2307/261-6000
Fax: (031) 816-2076

Community Based Development Programme (CBDP)
P O Box 32679, Braamfontein 2017
Tel: (011) 484-3720
Fax: (011) 484-3723

Community Development Resource Association (CDRA)
6 Beach Road
Woodstock 7925
Tel: (021) 47-9007
Fax: (021) 47-9006

3. GENERAL ADULT EDUCATION

Centre for Adult Education - Durban
University of Natal
King George V Avenue
Durban 4001
Tel: (031) 816-2399
Fax: (031) 816-1168

Centre for Adult Education - Pietermaritzburg
University of Natal
P O Box 375, Pietermaritzburg 3201
Tel: (0331) 955592/497
Fax: (0331) 6-9792

Centre for Adult and Continuing Education
University of the Western Cape
Private Bag X17, Bellville 7530
Tel: (021) 959-2797
Fax: (021) 959-2481

Adult Education and Extramural Studies
University of Cape Town
Private Bag, Rondebosch 7700
Tel: (021) 650-2888
Fax: (021) 650-3489

Centre for Continuing Education
University of Witwatersrand
P O Wits 2050
Tel: (011) 716-5509/5510/80
Fax: (011) 339-3956

Education Support Project
201 Management House
38 Melle Street
Braamfontein 2001
Tel: (011) 339-2380/9
Fax: (011) 339-3334

4. MEDIA PRODUCTION SKILLS

Durban Media Trainers Group (DMTG)
Room 4 St Andrews Centre
21 St Andrews Street
Durban 4001
Tel: (031) 301-5657
Fax: (031) 301-6611

InterChurch Media Programme (IMP)
P O Box 9942, Johannesburg 2000
Tel: (011) 836-9851/2
Fax: (011) 836-9540

Media Resource Centre (MRC)
Dept of Education
University of Natal
King George V Avenue
Durban 4001
Tel: (031) 816-2090
Fax: (031) 261-6880

The Other Press Service (TOPS)
P O Box 843, Johannesburg 2000
Tel: (011) 3371489
Fax: (011) 3371488

5. COMPUTER TRAINING

Community Education Computer Society (CECS)
P O Box 270, Athlone 7760
Tel: (021) 696-8450
Fax: (021) 696-8537

Computer Services
Room 7 Ecumenical Centre
20 St Andrews Street
Durban 4001
Tel: (031) 304-2835
Fax: (031) 301-6611

3. RESOURCE CENTRES

This list is not exhaustive. We have tried to give a representative spread of resource centres dealing with various subjects and types of materials. Most are within the large city centres but some from the smaller centres and rural areas are included. Resource centres presently in homelands are included in this provincial list. Two resource centres just beyond our borders are listed.

1. CAPE

Adult Literacy and Advice Centre
P O Box 85, Umtata 5100
Tel: (0471) 31-0226/31-0755
Fax: (0471) 31-0755 (ask for fax signal)

Afesis Advice and Resource Centre
5 Zephyr Street
Pefferville
East London 5201
Tel: (0431) 43-3830/1
Fax: (0431) 43-2200

Border Early Learning Centre
50 Albany Street
East London 5201
Tel: (0431) 2-0723
Fax: (0431) 43-1408

Calusa
P O Box 373, Elliot 5460
Tel: (047972) ask operator for 204

Cape Town Trade Union Library
6 Community House
41 Salt River Road
Salt River 7925
Tel: (021) 47-7848
Fax: (021) 47-9244

Career Research and Information Centre (CRIC)
P O Box 378, Athlone 7764
Tel: (021) 637-8040
Fax: (021) 633-9022

Centre for Social Development
19 Somerset Street
Grahamstown 6140
Tel: (0461) 2-4483/2-4408
Fax: (0461) 2-5047

Children's Resource Centre
Community House
41 Salt River Road
Salt River 7925
Tel: (021) 47-5757
Fax: (021) 686-8532

Education Resource and Information Project
University of the Western Cape
Private Bag X17
Bellville 7530
Tel: (021) 959-2132/3088
Fax: (021) 959-2536

Independent Teacher Enrichment Centre (ITEC)
P O Box 549, East London 5200
Tel: (0431) 43-8333
Fax: (0431) 2-9263

Masifundise Educational Project
P O Box 100, Langa 7455
Tel: (021) 684-6701/2

Quaker Peace Centre
3 Rye Road
Mowbray 7700
Tel: (021) 685-2921
Fax:(021) 686-8167

SACHED Trust
5 Church Street
Mowbray 7700
Tel: (021) 686-8615/686-8531
Fax: (021) 47-2638

2. NATAL

Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA)
P O Box 2517, Pietermaritzburg 2000
Tel: (0331) 43-3830/1
Fax: (0331) 43-2200

Career Information Centre (CIC)
Room 36 Ecumenical Centre
20 St Andrews Street
Durban 4001
Tel: (031) 301-2097/8
Fax: (031) 301-6611

Chatsworth Early Learning Centre
P O Box 45221, Chatsglen 4012
Tel: (031) 43-0192/43-0287
Fax: (031) 43-9202

Community Care Centre
P O Box 497, Pietermaritzburg 3200
Tel: (0331) 94-2492
Fax: (0331) 45-5762

Ecumenical Resource Centre
Room 11 Ecumenical Centre
20 St Andrews Street
Durban 4001
Tel: (031) 301-8614
Fax: (031) 301-6611

Education Policy Unit
University of Natal
King George V Avenue
Durban 4001
Tel: (031) 816-2607
Fax: (031) 81-5755

Industrial Health Unit
Department of Sociology
University of Natal
King George V Avenue
Durban 4001
Tel: (031) 816-2441
Fax: (031) 816-1423

Midlands Education Development Unit
Centre for Adult Education - Pietermaritzburg
University of Natal
P O Box 375, Pietermaritzburg 3201
Tel: (0331) 95-5911
Fax: (0331) 95-5599

Pietermaritzburg Resource Centre
195 Longmarket Street
Pietermaritzburg 3200
Tel: (0331) 42-8984
Fax: (0331) 94-9653

Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Action (PACSA)
P O Box 2338, Pietermaritzburg 3200
Tel: (0331) 42-0052
Fax:(0331) 45-5106

SACHED Trust - Natal
72 Canada Road
Durban 4001
Tel: (031) 305-6748
Fax: (031) 305-6749

Sibusisiwe Resource Centre
P O Box 89, Clernaville 3602
Tel: (031) 707-1122

Umtapo Centre
P O Box 2792, Durban 4000
Tel: (031) 305-3506
Fax: (031) 309-4887

Valley Trust
P O Box 33, Bothas Hill 3550
Tel: (031) 777-1955
Fax: (031) 777-1114

3. TRANSVAAL

Career Centre
P O Box 38, Orlando 1804
Tel: (011) 938-1439
Fax: (011) 938-1439

Community Resource and Information Centre (CRIC)
6th Floor, Harmstead House
Cnr Biccard and Jorissen Street
Braamfontein 2001
Tel: (011) 403-2340/339-8240
Fax: (011) 403-1836

Film Resource Unit
P O Box 30987, Braamfontein 2017
Tel: (011) 29-6967
Fax: (011) 23-5353

Funda Centre
P O Box 359, Orlando 1804
Tel: (011) 938-1485
Fax: (011) 938-7439

King Luthuli Transformation Centre
Suite 723, 209 Medical Centre
Jeppe Street
Johannesburg 2001
Tel: (011) 337-8647
Fax: (011) 337-8729

South African Council of Churches
P O Box 4921, Johannesburg 2000
Tel: (011) 492-1380
Fax: (011) 492-1448

South African History Archives
P O Box 31719, Braamfontein 2017
Tel: (011) 403-2615
Fax: (011) 339-7546

Thusanang Study Project
Evangelical Lutheran Church
Ditshweung Village
Jane Furse 1085
Tel: (0020) Jane Furse 8

Wits Workers Library
1st Floor, Gilhove Chambers
57 De Villiers Street
Johannesburg 2001
Tel: (011) 337-8145/29-4914
Fax: (011) 337-8966

Workplace Information Group
P. O. Box 5244, Johannesburg 2000
Tel: (011) 337-9413
Fax: (011) 29-3920

4. SOUTHERN AFRICA

Ecumenical Documentation and Information Centre for Eastern and Southern Africa (EDICESA)
P O Box H94, Hatfield Harare
Zimbabwe
Tel: (09263-4) 50311/2
Fax: (09263-4) 5-2979

Transformation Resource Centre
P O Box 1388, Maseru 100, Lesotho
Tel: (09266) 31-4463
Fax: (09266) 31-0161

4. MEDIA PRODUCERS AND PUBLISHERS

This is a sample list of organisations and publishers from whom resources can be bought eg. books, periodicals, newspapers. videos, posters.

African National Congress (ANC) - National Office
P O Box 61884, Marshalltown 2017
Tel: (011) 330-7000
Fax: (011) 333-9090

Agenda
Room 29 Ecumenical Centre
20 St Andrews Street
Durban 4001
Tel: (031) 3054074
Fax: (031) 3016611

Audio Visual Alternative (AVA)
c/o Dept of Psychology, University of Natal
King George V Avenue
Durban 4001
Tel: (031) 816-1026
Fax: (031) 816-2618

Black Sash - National Office
5 Long Street
Mowbray 7700
Tel: (021) 689-3150/685-3513/4
Fax: (021) 685-7510

Buchu Books
P O Box 2580, Cape Town 8000
Tel: (021) 45-3786
Fax: (021) 47-2774

Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE)
P O Box 32882, Braamfontein 2017
Tel: (011) 339-2181
Fax: (011) 339-7158

Community Video Education Trust
P O Box 98, Observatory 7925
Tel: (021) 448-4024
Fax: (021) 47-7251

Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) - National Office
P O Box 1019, Johannesburg 2000
Tel: (011) 492-1440/5
Fax: (011) 834-6528

Congress of South African Writers (COSAW) - National Office
P O Box 421007, Fordsburg 2091
Tel: (011) 833-2530/1/3
Fax: (011) 833-2532

Congress of South African Writers (COSAW) - Western Cape
P O Box 418, Athlone 7764
Tel: (021) 696-8405
Fax: (021) 696-8366

Critical Health
P O Box 16250, Doornfontein 2028
Tel: (011) 484-3078

Culture and Working Life Programme (CWLP)
Dept of Sociology
University of Natal
King George V Avenue
Durban 4001
Tel: (031) 816-2495
Fax: (031) 816-1423

David Philip Publisher (Pty) Ltd
P O Box 23408, Claremont 7735
Tel: (021) 64-4136
Fax: (021) 64-3358

Earthlife South Africa
Private Bag 9016, Pietermaritzburg 3200
Tel: (0331) 94-0241/6
Fax: (0331) 94-2237

Educational Resources Information Service (ERIS)
MRC, Dept of Education
University of Natal
King George V Avenue
Durban 4001
Tel: (031) 816-2090
Fax: (031) 261-6880

Education Contact Network
50 Umbilo Road
Durban 4001
Tel: (031) 305-5452
Fax: (031) 305-9721

English Resource Unit
St Andrews Centre
21 St Andrews Street
Durban 4001
Tel: (031) 305-9866
Fax: (031) 301-6611

Environment and Development Agency
P O Box 62054, Marshalltown 2107
Tel: (011) 834-1905
Fax: (011) 834-1905

Film and Allied Workers' Organisation (FAWO) - National Office
P O Box 16455, Doornfontein 2028
Tel: (011) 402-4570/1
Fax: (011) 23-5353

Grassroots Educare Trust
P O Box 38055, Gatesville 7764
Tel: (021) 638-3111
Fax: (021) 637-3011

Grassroots Publications
P O Box 1161, Cape Town 8000
Tel: (021) 696-8414
Fax: (021) 696-8346

Heinemann SA
P O Box 2017, Houghton 2041
Tel: (011) 483-3292
Fax: (011) 728-4665

Human Awareness Programme (HAP)
P O Box 95134, Grant Park 2051
Tel: (011) 640-3126/27/91/92
Fax: (011) 640-3126

Human Rights Commission (HRC)
P O Box 32723, Braamfontein 2017
Tel: (011) 403-4450
Fax: (011) 339-1422

Institute of Black Research (IBR)
Dept of Sociology
University of Natal
King George V Avenue
Durban 4001
Tel: (031) 816-2496
Fax: (031) 816-1423

International Labour Research and Information Group (ILRIG)
P O Box 213, Salt River 7925
Tel: (021) 47-6375
Fax: (021) 47-9244

Learn & Teach Publications
P O Box 556, Johannesburg 2000
Tel: (011) 29-5051
Fax: (011) 834-7415

Learning Nation
P O Box 10760, Johannesburg 2000
Tel: (011) 333-2721/2/4/5
Fax: (011) 333-2733

Legal Resources Centre (LRC)
Room 71 Ecumenical Centre
20 St Andrews Street
Durban 4001
Tel: (031) 301-7572
Fax: (031) 304-2823

Media Resource Centre (MRC)
Dept of Education
University of Natal
King George V Avenue
Durban 4001
Tel: (031) 816-2090
Fax: (031) 261-6880

New Readers Project
Centre for Adult Education
University of Natal
King George V Avenue
Durban 4001
Tel: (031) 816-2516
Fax: (031) 816-1168

Ravan Publishing House
P O Box 31134, Braamfontein 2017
Tel: (011) 403-3925/6/7/8/9
Fax: (011) 339-2439

Read Education Trust
P O Box 30994, Braamfontein 2017
Tel: (011) 339-5941
Fax: (011) 403-2311

SACHED Trust - National Office
P O Box 11350, Johannesburg 2000
Tel: (011) 23-9746
Fax: (011) 333-2297

Sereti sa Sechaba Publishers
P O Box 62384, Marshalltown 2107
Tel: (011) 337-6294/5/6
Fax: (011) 337-6234

Skotaville
P O Box 32483, Braamfontein 2017
Tel: (011) 339-1871
Fax: (011) 339-1874

South African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC) - National Office
P O Box 941, Pretoria 0001
Tel: (012) 21-1793/323-6459
Fax: (012) 21-1795

South African Communist Party (SACP)
P O Box 1027, Johannesburg 2000
Tel: (011) 836-6425
Fax: (011) 836-8366

South African Council of Churches (SACC) - National Office
P O Box 4921, Johannesburg 2000
Tel: (011) 492-1380
Fax: (011) 492-1448

South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR)
P O Box 32597, Braamfontein 2017
Tel: (011) 403-3600
Fax: (011) 403-3671

South African Labour Bulletin (SALB)
P O Box 3851, Johannesburg 2000
Tel: (011) 337-8511/2/3/4
Fax: (011) 337-9207

South African Research Service (SARS)
P O Box 32716, Braamfontein 2017
Tel: (011) 403-1912/1586
Fax: (011) 403-2534

Speak Magazine
P O Box 45213, Mayfair 2018
Tel: (011) 29-6166
Fax: (011) 29-4354

The Other Press Service (TOPS)
P O Box 843, Johannesburg
Tel: (011) 337-1487/8
Fax: (011) 337-8638

Trade Union Research Project (TURP)
Dept of Sociology
University of Natal
King George V Avenue
Durban 4001
Tel: (031) 816-2438/81-2223
Fax: (031) 816-1423

Weekly Mail Publications
P O Box 260425, Excom 2023
Tel: (011) 331-1712
Fax: (011) 331-7540

Nomsa tells the story of how her community in Umlazi set up their own resource centre.

First they had to find out what a resource centre is, and then they started in a small way to collect resources.

The whole community worked together.

By Christmas the resource centre was named at a big celebration.

This is a fictitious story, a guide for others to follow.

ULWAZI – for power and courage

459 Temong Section
Tembisa
1628

Dear Sir/Madam

My hometown is Aliwal North. For
past years we have been trying
a Resource Centre there but
unfortunately our efforts were
to lack of proper direction. Ho
the "New Nation" article has o
generated my interest in the m

The Aliwal Advice Centre was
still prepared to accomodate
Resource Centre within its fo
building. There is no librar
township and the one in town
restrictive to blacks.

I wonder if you could be of
to our endeavour of plannir
this Centre in Ali

I write this lett
the article on res
in the "New Natio

Regards
Vovi Cebisa

Ikageng Community Centre
P O Box 434
Jane Furse 1085

Dear Libby Dreyer

We received your information letter concerning training. We appreciate that idea and we like to send our people to acquire some skills. Our problem is, we are just started our centre resently, we do not have funds to send our member but we are looking for fundraising.

We are asking for (help) finnencial assistence in order to send our member.

Yours faithfully
Colman Moqobe Marota
Project Co-ordinator

Ntabaleng PUBLIC School
P O Box 5029
BOTSHABELO 9781

Dear Sir

I wish you could help us to set up and plan a library in our township. We are living in the second biggest township in Southern Africa called BOTSHABELO. It is situated 50 km away from BLOEMFONTEIN.

We hardly have a place to study or borrow books for our studies. At the moment we do not have funds to build that library and equip it.

Your help will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully
Solomon Sello Mosala
(UNISA STUDENT)

ISBN 0 86980 831 1